

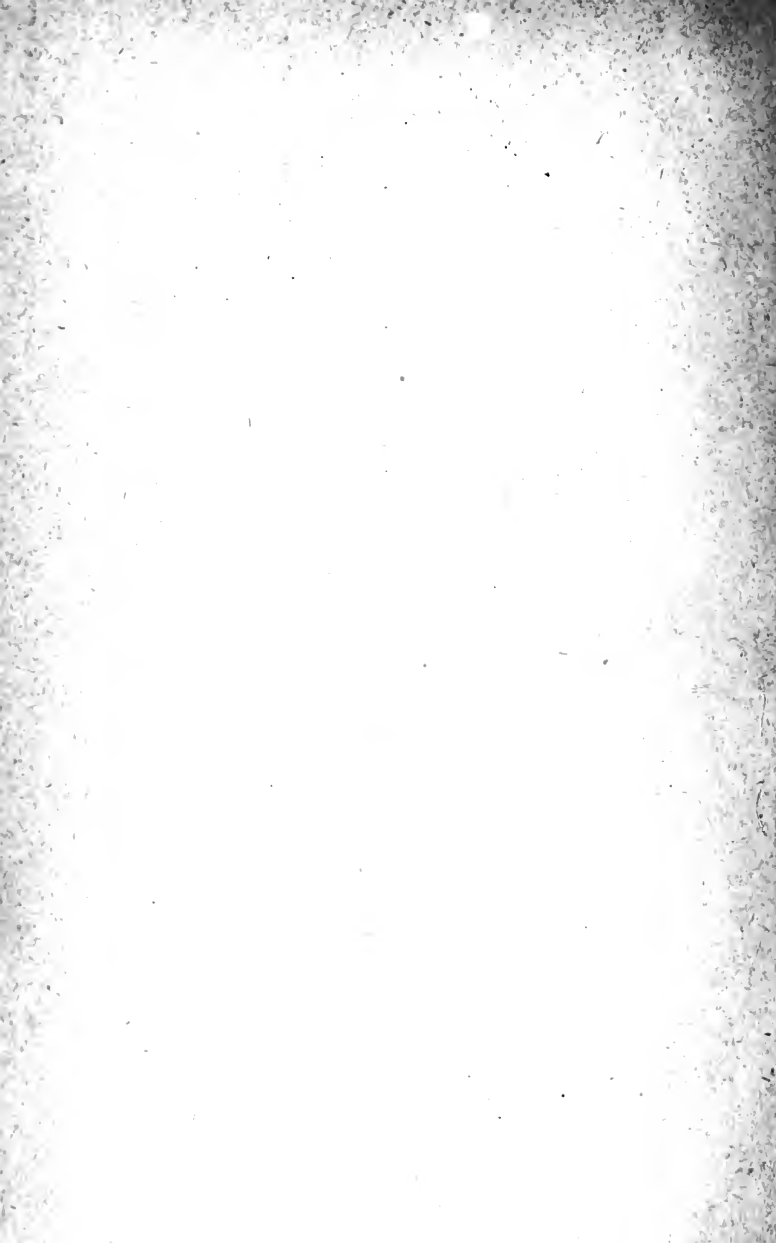


HOWARD
BEECHER.

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HENRY
WARD BEECHER,

HIS LIFE AND WORK 0

BY

J. T. LLOYD

AUTHOR OF "GOLDEN GLEAMS"



LONDON
WALTER SCOTT, 24 WARWICK LANE
PATERNOSTER ROW
1887.



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Preface.

THE present Life of Henry Ward Beecher is the first that has ever been published. Several magazine sketches have appeared from time to time during the last thirty years, but not one comprehensive and trustworthy biography. At the close of the civil war the people made many urgent requests for a Life; but he strongly and persistently objected, and begged his friends to desist, which they stoutly refused to do, however, until it was ascertained that his gifted sister, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, was preparing a biographical volume, entitled "Men of our Time," which would include a sketch of Mr. Beecher. That brief outline of forty or fifty pages is by far the best and most reliable that we have. Mr. Haweis published a very interesting article in the "Contemporary Review," which was extensively read on both sides the Atlantic, and which was copied into other periodicals. Professor Henry Fowler's essay, in his "American Pulpit," will always be regarded as containing, on the whole, a pretty fair statement of Mr. Beecher's theological position, though, having been pub-

lished in about six years after Mr. Beecher came to Brooklyn, it contains but few biographical facts.

This Life, as will be seen by the accompanying letter, appears by the express permission of Mr. Beecher ; and had it not been for such permission, the present volume would have never been written.

The materials for this work were culled from many different sources. Mrs. Stowe's "Men of our Time," "The American Pulpit," by Professor Fowler, and Mr. Haweis's excellent article were very helpful ; but the mass of information contained here was taken from Mr. Beecher's own books, which are full of autobiographical references. Among these the following were found of constant assistance :—"Lectures on Preaching," first, second, and third series ; "Liberty and War ;" "Norwood, or Village Life in New England ;" "Life Thoughts ;" "Sunshine in the Soul ;" "Lecture-Room Talks ;" "Royal Thoughts ;" and six or seven volumes of sermons. No other man's discourses are so profusely illustrated with incidents in his own life. It is not often that he delivers a sermon without drawing upon his own history. This is certainly a commendable habit, especially in a great man, every single fact in whose life is of deepest interest to the public.

It will be observed that no mention is made in this volume of a long and painful trial through which he was made to pass a few years ago. Suffice it to say that, in the judgment of the great majority of the best people in the States, he was perfectly innocent of the fearful charge brought against him by wicked persons. The whole affair originated in jealousy. Advantage was taken of his childlike simplicity and proverbially generous impulses. His chief assailant was a disappointed man, who

thought he could secure prosperity to himself at the expense of wrecking the character of his loving, self-denying friend and pastor. Plymouth Church never lost confidence in their minister. Through the thickest darkness they stuck to him as a dear father whose life was in their keeping. They upheld him by their united prayers, cheered him on with their tears and their smiles, and stood by his side in the face of every foe. When many a cross wind was blowing, when many a friend outside was deserting him, Plymouth Church never flinched a moment. They were his friends indeed, who would neither leave nor forsake him. When the infamous trial in the Civil Court came to an end, and the costs were declared to be £15,000, they at once paid every penny, and gave him his usual salary of £5000 besides. Royal people ! The Lord will reward and has rewarded them for their fidelity to His servant ; and punishment will descend, and has already descended, upon the heads of his persecutors.

One object, and perhaps the chief object, of this Life is to put Mr. Beecher in the proper light before the British people. While his name is universally familiar, there are not many who know anything accurately about him. He is supposed by some to be a Unitarian, by others a Universalist, and by others still, a Free Thinker, or Sceptic. It will appear from the following pages, I hope, that he still adheres to all those doctrines which are commonly denominated evangelical. He is not orthodox in the same sense that a Wesleyan, a Baptist, or a Presbyterian is accounted orthodox ; but he is sound in the larger sense in which all evangelical churches are at one. He is a Trinitarian, believes in the Atonement, Regeneration, Sanctification, and a future life of rewards and punishments. Only a few weeks ago

he preached an exceedingly powerful sermon on "The Divinity of Christ," when he exclaimed respecting the Saviour: "Thou art my Hope, my Trust, my Life, my Object of worship; for all that belongs to me, within and without, for the present and for the time to come, Thou, Lord Jesus, art mine." If to believe that Jesus Christ is God, having all authority in His own hands, is to be a Socinian or Unitarian, then Mr. Beecher is one; and if to maintain that the Man Christ Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us is to deny the Atonement, then Mr. Beecher denies it.

J. T. LL.





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CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE.

HENRY WARD BEECHER—minister of the Gospel, statesman, lecturer, man of letters, and philanthropist—was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, United States, 24th June 1813. He was one of a family of thirteen, many of whom remain unto the present time, and are more or less distinguished either as preachers or as *litterateurs*. A sister, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, has a world-wide reputation as an authoress, won chiefly through that most popular novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Two or three of the brothers are exceedingly well-known in the States; but their fame has not spread abroad into other lands. But all the family are great, in that they are all eccentric and original. Every Beecher is conspicuous, perfectly unique, totally unlike everybody else, intensely *himself*, a fresh creation of the Almighty.

Mr. Beecher was blessed with parents who were eminent alike for their intellectual endowments and their profound transparent piety. His father, Dr. Lyman Beecher, was born at New Haven, Connecticut, 12th October 1775, studied theology under the great Dr. Dwight, obtained a church at East Hampton, Long Island, and was ordained in 1798. After a brief ministry there he returned to his native State, and became settled at Litchfield. From thence, in 1826, he went to Boston, where he laboured with eminent

success until, in 1832, he was appointed President of the Lane Theological Seminary at Cincinnati. Here he remained doing good service for a period of twenty years. In addition to his arduous duties as President and Professor, he had also the pastoral charge of the second Presbyterian Church in that city. Having finished the work given him to do here below, he removed to the city of Brooklyn, where his distinguished son was labouring with marked success, and there enjoyed a serene and cheerful old age, expiring in 1863 in his 88th year.

Dr. Beecher was a mighty power in the country as preacher, instructor, and social reformer. Every good cause found in him a faithful friend and supporter. Denominationally, he was a Presbyterian; but a man of his calibre could not be confined within the narrow limits of a sect. He was as broad as humanity. He cast none of his noble efforts to reform mankind into the vat of sectarianism. Still, it is to be remembered that he was of a critical and speculative turn of mind, and felt quite at home on the battle-field of theological controversy. Endowed with a logical, penetrative, and vigorous intellect, he naturally plunged into the theological excitements of the age, and became deeply involved in them, though he occupied a higher position than the majority of his brethren, standing on the platform not of denominational creed, but of personal conviction. He lived in exciting times—times in which human omniscience reigned supreme. Men knew more about the Supreme Being than about themselves; and they argued and reasoned about Him as if He were their next door neighbour. Dr. Beecher set his face like flint against indulging in such rash familiarity while speaking of the Almighty and His glorious purposes; and, as a consequence, he nearly lost his standing as a Presbyterian minister. Dr. Wilson of Cincinnati claimed that he was a dangerous heresiarch, and that nothing could preserve the integrity and purity of the Church short of his decapitation. Dr. Beecher was a man, not simply a theologian; a preacher, not merely a controversialist; an intense sympathiser with men in their struggles, their sufferings, and their temptations, not a dry scientific speculator, or a logic-grinding machine. He was a man of

hallowed sentiments and tender sympathies, whose only object in life was to help his fellow-beings in their sore conflict with evil, sorrow, and vice. His profound piety, his high reverence, would not allow him to peep over Jehovah's shoulder to ascertain what was written in His private, secret books; but these very qualities made him great in the glorious realm of earnest, honest work for the Master.

It is impossible to portray Dr. Beecher as he really was. Men of undoubted ability, and who knew him well, have made several attempts to delineate him; but so vast, so complex, so many-sided was he that only comparative failure has been the reward. His own children have sketched him again and again, from many sides and in various moods, but even they have not succeeded in giving us anything like a perfect portraiture of him. A man of genius baffles the painter's art and evades the biographer's pen. As he stands high above the reach of imitation, in the grandeur of inspired excellence, he cannot be brought down and squeezed into the narrow limits of a verbal description. And yet we are not to suppose for a moment that Dr. Beecher's character was perfectly harmonious and symmetrical. Indeed there were glaring defects in it which caused Nature, in some of her most lovely and subduing aspects, to be a sealed book to him. He had no appreciation whatever of the beautiful. Henry Ward, in a lecture entitled "The Personal Element in Oratory," makes the following amusing reference to his revered father: "I recollect my dear old father talking about persons that worshipped God in clouds, and saw the hand of God in beauty. He would say, 'It is all moonshine, my son, with no doctrine nor edification nor sanctity in it at all, and I despise it.' I never knew my father to look at a landscape in his life, unless he saw pigeons or squirrels in it. I have seen him watch the stream, but it was invariably to know if there were pickerel or trout in it. He was a hunter, every inch; but I never could discern that he had an æsthetic element in him, so far as relates to pure beauty. Sublimity he felt. Whatever was grand he appreciated very keenly. I do not think that he ever looked at one building in his life, except the Girard College. When he came suddenly upon that, and it opened up to

him, he looked up and admired it ; and I always marvelled at that as a little instance of grace in him. That is laughable to you, I have no doubt ; and since these addresses are the most familiar of all talks, I will give you a little more of my amusing experience with him at home. When he became an old man, he lived six months in my family, and during that time he was much interested in the pictures hanging on the walls of the house. One which particularly attracted his attention, and with which he was greatly pleased, represented a beautiful lake, with hunters ensconced behind trees shooting at ducks on the lake. He would look at that picture every day, and I, not thinking of the sportsmen, but only of the charming landscape, said to myself, ' Well, it is good to see him breaking from the spell of some of his old ideas, and now, that he has become old, to see these fine gifts growing and coming out—to behold him ripening into the æsthetic element in this way.' One day I stood behind him as he was looking at the picture, unconscious of my presence. Said he, ' He must have hit one, two, three—and, I guess, four.' ” This absence of the æsthetic element exerted a subtle influence over his whole character, and rendered him much less efficient and attractive than he might otherwise have been. Providence, however, as we shall see by-and-bye, interposed in such a way as to prevent the transmission of this defect to his offspring.

Dr. Beecher's distinguishing characteristic was *intensity*. " Ideas lay in his mind in a state of fusion. His favourite definition of eloquence was ' logic afire,' and he exemplified his definition. Some men first refine their thoughts by mental heats, then coin them. He not unfrequently poured his out hot from the crucible." The intensity of his convictions, and of the language in which he expressed them, caused him often to be misunderstood and misrepresented. He did not keep himself sufficiently in subjection, but allowed himself to be carried away and controlled entirely, not of course by " a two-inch enthusiasm," or a " patty-pan ebullition," but by overwhelming personal convictions which burned like fire at the very centre of his being. Had he been of cooler temperament and of more cautious habit, he would have been more precise, measured, and circumspect in

many of his statements of truth, but a thousand times less effective. It was his red-hot enthusiasm, his vehement earnestness, his uncompromising fidelity to conviction, that constituted his Samson strength, and that made him a terror to evil-doers as well as a city of refuge to the faithful. The fuel that fed the internal fire was purity.

Another quality of this great man which, in an important sense, lay at the very root of his greatness, was what Emerson would call "*a certain robust, radiant, physical health; or, shall I say, great volumes of animal heat.*" It is generally admitted now that physical health—health of muscle, health of nerve, health of brain—is the grand foundation of mental health. A thoroughly healthy mind resides alone in a thoroughly healthy body. Health might be described in the eloquent words of Coleridge, with one verbal alteration, as being "the *physical* accompaniment and actuating principle of genius." "What is genius?" asks our hero, in a well-known lecture on Health. "What is genius but a condition of fibre, and a condition of health in fibre? It is nothing in the world but automatic thinking. And what is automatic thinking? It is thought that *thinks itself*, instead of being run up or worried up to think. Whoever thinks without thinking is in fact a genius." Dr. Beecher enjoyed excellent health, though he was occasionally subject to violent attacks of dyspepsia. His constitution was vigorous, and free of all hereditary impurity. The only hereditary weakness in the Beecher family was a slight derangement of the digestive organs, which dashed the blood with hypochondria. Dr. Beecher himself suffered somewhat from this malady during one period of his life, but it soon wore out, leaving no trace behind.

It may be observed, in passing, that the Beechers of America have sprung from a purely English stock. Dr. Beecher's great-great-grandfather, John Beecher, was born in Kent, England, whence he emigrated to New Haven, U.S. We also learn that his great-grandmother hailed from the rugged mountains of Wales, being the daughter, as Mr. Beecher often remarks with a playful smile upon his lips, of "a full-blooded Welsh woman, a Roberts."

But the maxim is, that a man receives more from his

mother than from his father ; that it is the mother, in fact, who imparts the *distinguishing* characteristics. Mr. Beecher's mother was endowed with all the physical, the moral, and the spiritual qualities requisite to pre-eminence in the realm of motherhood. She was one in a thousand, yea, in ten thousand ; and all who came in contact with her felt the subtle power of her superiority. She was great all round, everything contributing its willing share to her greatness. Majestic and commanding in appearance, gentle and dignified in manner, genial and loving in disposition, trusty and sympathetic in friendship, she was invested with an attractiveness that tempted people to fall down at her feet in sincerest adoration. She was a born artist. Nature lay at her feet a willing servant, anxious to be of help to her in any thought or act of kindness. Nay, Nature was a generous mother, who supplied her soul with the nourishment requisite to its full symmetrical development. She loved Nature with a fondness bordering on affection. To her the beautiful was a mirror of Divinity. But the most prominent trait in her character was her piety, her reverence for God. In her heart was a throne on which Jehovah sat and reigned, wielding a sceptre of love ; and her Jehovah was omnipresent. In pretty flowers, in beautiful sceneries, in the sublimity and splendour of the firmament, in all created things she saw her God and worshipped Him. Blessed is the man who has such a mother !

This accomplished, loving, pious woman died when Henry Ward was only three years old. Her charming captivating beauty faded in the gloom of death. What a loss ! A thousand times has Mr. Beecher publicly referred to his noble mother, and invariably in terms of longing affection. She lives in his imagination the best, most charming creature God ever made. How sacred and hallowed and inspiring is her memory to him. And although she departed for the land of day while he was yet an infant, he is more indebted to her for his wonderful success in life than to any other human being. She has known a resurrection in him. "My dear old father," says Ward Beecher, "after his day of labour had closed, used to fancy that in some way he was so

connected with me that he was still at work ; and on one occasion, after a Sabbath morning service, some one in a congratulatory way said to the venerable and meek old patriarch, 'Well, Doctor, how did you like your son's sermon?' 'It was good—good as I could do myself.' And then, with an emphatic pointing of his forefinger, he added, 'If it had not been for *me*, you would never have had him.'" That was perfectly true, and tolerably patent to all ; but had the mother been living she could have uttered the words with more appropriateness and emphasis still. The elements which have made Mr. Beecher one of the most popular and influential men in America came to him from his mother. He has inherited strength, ruggedness, determination, a disposition to adhere to, and proclaim the right in spite of all opposition, from his father ; but it is to his mother that he owes his perception and love of the beautiful, his poetic fervour, his glowing imagination, and his yearning sympathy for perishing men. He is greatest in heart-qualities, and these came down to him along the line of apostolic succession from his mother.

Given such a father and such a mother, each the opposite of the other in temperament, education, and experience, and each neutralizing the defects as well as perfecting and glorifying the virtues of the other, it would not have been at all presumptuous to prophesy that their offspring would rise to extraordinary eminence, and that some of them would be an improvement on both the parents. It is the object of these pages to trace the career of the most distinguished of them—Henry Ward.





CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

EVERY living thing has its infancy, from which it opens out into fulness of size and beauty and power ; and we find that infancy, childhood, youth, is always the most interesting and edifying period in the history of every life. With what wondering delight do we linger in the garden or the orchard in early spring, as before our eyes the lovely buds are bursting and slowly expanding into full bloom and glory. Even flowers have their babyhood. How we admire the mighty oak as it stands in front of us, in the zenith of its strength and splendour, firm enough to do successful battle with all the storms and hurricanes of heaven ; but it was once a tiny acorn, no bigger than a hazel-nut, the plaything of little children. Human life also has a most interesting process of development. Here again childhood is a formative, germinating, developing, prophetic period, an Old Testament of promise, preparing, waiting, yearning for expansion and fulfilment in a New Testament of ripe and manly age. The child is father—mother—to the man. This was peculiarly true of the boy Henry Ward. Springing from the grandest and noblest of aristocracies, the aristocracy of pure blood and vigorous health, he was from his earliest days a child of unusual promise. Eccentricity was stamped with indelible ink upon his very constitution. From the first faintest dawn of intelligence it was

perfectly evident to every one that he was destined by Providence to become a mighty power in some important sphere. His chief characteristics were vivacity, cheerfulness, good humour, mirthfulness. In describing this period he says: "I was, from my earliest recollection, healthy, buoyant, active, good-natured, and mirthful. I had a large stock of animal spirits, which impelled to mere motion for the sake of the pleasure of motion, or rather from the impatience of sitting still." Again: "I thank God for two things—First, that I was born and bred in the country, of parents that gave me a sound constitution and a noble example. I never can pay back what I got from my parents. . . . Next, I am thankful that I was brought up in circumstances where I never became acquainted with wickedness." What a noble testimony! How delightful it is to think of a man who can thus refer to the days of his childhood! Here is another reference to the same period, characterised by great tenderness and beauty: "I never was sullied in act, nor in thought, nor in feeling when I was young. I grew up as pure as a woman. And I cannot express to God the thanks which I owe to my mother, and to my father, and to the great household of sisters and brothers among whom I lived. And the secondary knowledge of those wicked things which I have gained in later life in a professional way, I gained under such guards that it was not harmful to me."

But in his early training and education, the presence of that mother to whom he owes so much was very deeply missed. Though his father and stepmother were exceedingly conscientious and pious, as well as anxious to train him in the way of truth and godliness, they both lacked genuine genial sympathy with youthful feelings and aspirations, and could not appreciate or even excuse the intense repugnance felt by a healthy, active, and mirthful child to ceremonial restrictions and arbitrary rules. His whole nature rebelled against all restraint, and this constant rebellion against the restraints put upon him by his parents must have retarded somewhat his progress in mental and spiritual excellencies. There was an aunt who was a minister of more good to him than anybody else, and to her he often pays a tribute of esteem and affection. Referring to this point, he says:

“So far as religious restraint was brought to bear upon me, I think it was painful, for physical reasons mainly. There was something inexpressibly attractive to me in the stillness of the Sabbath day; and yet the Sabbath day was rather a burden to me. There was nothing so pleasant as to have my aunt sit down and read stories from the Scriptures to me; and yet there was nothing less tolerable than to be obliged to read the Bible. There were very few subjects on which I liked to talk so little as the subject of religion; and yet among the grievances of my childhood was the heart-swell, the wish, that somebody would let me talk to him, or would talk to me on this very subject. My childhood was doubly strong, deep, religious, both inbred and cultured; and at the same time there was a good deal of impatience and some waywardness in my disposition.” There was nothing he dreaded more than the Sunday Catechism, which entered so largely and so extravagantly into the religious education of children in those days. His hatred of the exercise knew no bounds; and speaking of it in mature years he can hardly restrain his indignation: “I think to force children to associate religion with such dry morsels is to violate the spirit not only of the New Testament, but of common sense as well. I know one thing, that if I am ‘lax and latitudinarian,’ the Sunday Catechism is to blame for a part of it. The dinners I have lost because I could not go through ‘sanctification,’ and ‘justification,’ and ‘adoption,’ and all such questions, lie heavily on my memory. I do not know that they have brought forth any blossoms. I have a kind of grudge against many of those truths that I was taught in my childhood, and I am not conscious that they have worked up a particle of faith in me.” In the same breath he makes this touching mention of his dear aunt Esther: “My good old aunt in heaven—I wonder what she is doing. I take it that she now sits beauteous, clothed in white, that round her sit chanting cherub children, and that she is opening to them from her larger range sweet stories, every one fraught with thought, and taste, and feeling, and lifting them up to a higher plane. One Sunday afternoon with my aunt Esther did me more good than forty Sundays in church with my father. He

thundered over my head, and she sweetly instructed me down in my heart. The promise that she would read Joseph's history to me on Sunday was enough to draw a silver thread of obedience through the entire week; and if I was tempted to break my promise, I said, 'No! Aunt Esther is going to read on Sunday;' and I would do, or I would not do all through the week, for the sake of getting that sweet instruction on Sunday."

It is a grand thing to educate children into a lively sense of the sacredness of moral obligations, to show them that duty is too divine to be trifled with; but it is quite possible to go about the task in so legal, rigid, and pharisaic a spirit as to make sacred religious realities the most repulsive things conceivable. Parents often spoil their offspring by exercising undue authority over them. Love, not law, is the best instructor of the young. Obligation is sacred, but the heart of man is more sacred still; and rather than make duty look ugly and disagreeable, we had better keep it in the background, or out of sight altogether. If it be presented, let it be clothed with every beauty and charm imaginable.

"Men must be taught as though you taught them not,
And things unknown proposed as things forgot."

Children should be instructed to observe the right on every occasion, but it may be necessary not to remind them of their *duty* in the matter. Tell them that duty is the most charming and lovely of all realities in God's universe. Upon this vital point Mr. Beecher makes this retrospective, personal reference: "During the whole of my early life, almost, I was brought up to do things because *I must*. I went to church because *I must*. I kept Sunday, so far as I did keep it, because *I must*. I do not know that there was one effort made by my father or mother to make the Sabbath day pleasant to me; and for the most obvious reasons. My father was a clergyman, and Sunday was to him the most laborious day of the week, and it was absolutely impossible for him to take charge of the children at home. My second mother—the one that brought me up—was one of the most devoted women that I ever knew,

having been a convert and a member of Dr. Payson's church, in Portland, Maine. She was naturally proud, though grace had made her good. She looked at everything in the light of duty. Her whole religious life was strained very high, and was filled with crosses. She took them and carried them herself, and put them upon her children. And everything that was brought to me was brought as a duty. I *must* read the Bible; I must learn the Catechism (though I never did learn it); I *must* do a great many things."

In the whole realm of parental government and discipline nothing requires to be handled with more care and wisdom than the rod. Some children are brought up under the grim shadow of punishment. They are ever reminded of, and often seriously made to feel, the dread consequence of waywardness and disobedience. While it may be true that the rod is a necessary factor in parental discipline, it certainly should not be allowed to occupy the most prominent position. To evade punishment many a child will commit a double, treble crime; the second crime to hide the first, and the third to hide the second. Very few parents have wisdom enough to be entrusted with any instrument of penalty. Dr. Lyman Beecher, great as he was, was not always sufficiently cautious in his administration of law; for his illustrious son makes use of these words: "I recollect distinctly that I used to tell lies. If there are any here who did not, they may cast the first stone! I was truth-loving. I preferred the truth; but I took refuge in falsehood as a rabbit takes refuge in a hole to save himself from the hounds. It was a covert from something that was worse to me than telling lies. My father's short, sharp, abrupt way of speaking, and his very abrupt *something else* when I had done wrong, was a terror to me. I did not want to tell a lie, and I was always sorry when I had told one; but the dread which I had of being reprimanded and punished was such that I sought to avoid it by resorting to falsehood."

In spite, however, of all shortcomings and deficiencies which characterised his religious education at home, he was from his earliest days a child of God. He blossomed like

the apple tree among the trees of the wood, and luscious fruit was found on him at a very early date. His opening out was beautiful beyond any power of description. He *grew*, in the true and full sense of the term. He developed in sweetness of disposition and amiability of manner as he increased in bodily stature. His growth was proportionate. He maintained a beautiful equilibrium in all departments of his being. In some children, mind opens out more quickly than body, and there appears that anomaly usually called precocity, which is only a most dangerous species of disease; in others, the body grows, leaving the soul lagging behind, a dwarf. But Henry Ward grew symmetrically; in him soul and body kept pace with each other all along. Bodily, intellectually, socially, spiritually, he was a pretty, lovely child; and from the chamber of childhood he passed into the hall of youth in the glory of spotless innocence. The central force in his character was love. How deeply and dearly he loved his parents, and how unspeakably precious to his soul was the unbroken sense of their love towards him. "He tells us how, as a boy, he woke up one midsummer night and listened, with a sense of half uneasy awe, to the wild cry of the marsh birds, whilst the moonlight streamed full into his room; and then as he grew more and more disturbed, he suddenly heard his father clear his throat, 'a-hem,' in the next room, and instantly that familiar sound restored his equanimity." He loved God with an affection too deep and sacred to be expressed in feeble words. He loved Him as he saw Him revealed in the sparkling purity of the sky, in the imperial majesty of the mountain, in the solemn grandeur of the forest, in the charming, captivating loveliness of the valley, in the smiling, fragrant magnificence and fascination of the garden; and above all, he loved Him in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. His spiritual life, even as a boy, was tender, deep, broad; and nothing saddened him more than to hear bald austere representations of the Divine Being. He was in sympathy with nature in all her various moods; but he hated everything that was horrible and frightful and unnatural. "I remember a minister," he says, "that came to our house when I was a boy. He was one of those men

who seemed to think that religious impressions were beneficial just in proportion as they made children cry; and it was as easy to make me cry as to make a tree rain after a shower by shaking it. He used to talk with us children on the subject of religion, and he told me some hobgoblin stories about bad boys. And O, they were the *naughtiest*, the *wickedest* boys that ever lived! He told me how a bad boy got sick, how he saw the devil coming after him, and how he cried, 'O mother, mother, there is the devil. There he is as far as the onion-bed. There he is coming through the gate! There he is inside the door!' I saw forty devils in the air. I dreamed of them. I did not shake off the feeling of terror which that conversation produced on my mind for years. And I cannot recall that I was a bit better for it. I used to suffer terribly on account of it, but I did not see that I was any better able to resist temptation. I did not put forth any greater efforts to avoid those evils that are incident to boyhood. I was just as likely to get mad and thrash my younger brothers. When I was sent to mill with instructions to come right home again, I was just as likely to linger by the way. I was just as likely to do work by eye-service. I do not recollect that frightening me by telling me about the devil ever did me any good, though it caused me a great deal of suffering." His God was a Father, gentle, loving, tender-hearted, sympathetic, forgiving; the devil was a monster whose very name sent thrills of terror through his heart. It was in love that he discovered both Mount Sinai and Calvary; and as far as he himself was concerned, Mount Sinai lay in the background hidden from view by Mount Zion.

While all true education is moral, yet it is usual to speak of two kinds—the religious and the secular. The secular education of Henry Ward was by no means neglected. He was early sent to school; and he passed from class to class, from grade to grade, until he graduated at Amherst College when only twenty-one years of age. He did not prove a very brilliant and successful scholar. His verbal memory was exceedingly defective, and he had no love for mathematics. Had he found it necessary or expedient to make his will on leaving college, in all probability he would have

bequeathed Euclid to his infernal majesty the devil. But his school-life was full of profit to him. Even then he was a great student of human nature. His fellow-students lay before him as so many open books. He studied *them*, and thereby discovered that it requires an artist to manage human beings. Character-reading was his chief study. And even before he left college he had begun his career as a public speaker. He used frequently to speak at temperance gatherings, and hold conference meetings. From Amherst College he went to Lane Theological Seminary, where he studied theology under his father for about three years. But here again it was his chief delight to come into contact with living men and speak to them on sacred themes. He now preached as often as opportunity presented itself. Finding Hebrew dull, and systematic theology dry, he found public speaking a perennial fount of joy and delight. He was a born orator. Kind nature had endowed him with the fundamental, essential, prerequisite condition of eloquence—genuine sympathy. A fire burned within him, and he must speak. He was a preacher, even in spite of himself.

His father had designed him for the ministry from the cradle, and never dreamed for a moment that he would be anything else than a preacher. He trained him for it as for a profession. Speaking of a "call" to the ministry, Mr. Ward Beecher makes this reference to himself: "Young men are sometimes brought up to it, as I was. I never had any choice about it. My father had eight sons. Only two of them ever tried to get away from preaching; and they did not succeed. The other six went right into the ministry just as naturally as they went into manhood." But his father's choice became his choice as well. He could not have kept out of the pulpit had he tried. God had ordained him minister of the Gospel in a council of eternity. To put it in his own words: "I am specially ordained. My mother ordained me. God sent her to be my ordaining power." If he had entered the ministry alone through external compulsion he could never have spoken in such a strain as the following: "I am the happiest man that lives. You could not tempt me out of this place. Suppose they had offered me the senatorship of the United States, do you

suppose I would have accepted it? Never, never! I do not expect to be tried. It is not the style of men that they are after now. They do not look into churches and pulpits for public men to-day. But were they to do it, there would be no temptation in it. There *could* be no temptation in it. Do you suppose I could be bribed out of the pulpit if Brown Brothers offered me a full half-partnership in their business? Never! There is not money enough in all the Rothschild's coffers to bring me the happiness that I have in your confidence and generous support, and the liberty which I have of discharging my conscience by free speech in your midst. I tell you there is a secret in living to do good. There is a secret in fidelity to men's consciences, and in that sympathy which can appeal to God and say, 'Thou knowest that I love my country; thou knowest that I love my fellow-men; thou knowest that I love thee, and that my whole life, from core to circumference, and from circumference back to core again, is in this blessed work of reconciling men to God, and thus bunding them up in Christian virtue and purity.' More of happiness than you can extract from wealth, or honour, or pleasure itself, you can—I say to every young man who is rightly endowed, and who has a heart that beats for this world—extract from the sphere of the Christian minister. You never will find a nobler sphere than that. If you come for the sake of honour, if you come for the sake of support, keep away; but if you love the work, and are willing to take it through good report and through evil report, there is not on this earth another calling that delights as it does to be an ambassador for Christ, and to be a friend of man among men. Here is a place where a man, humbling himself, becomes a leader. Here is a place where a man, throwing his life away, finds it. The pulpit is above all other places on the earth. It is higher than the law, higher than the Senate, higher than the Governor's seat, higher than the Presidency. And it is open to all. You can come if you love the business, and here you will find joys that care cannot ruffle, and remunerations that time itself cannot take from you." And in the intensity of his feeling he again cries out: "Oh! call me not away! Tempt me to nothing else! Now, hence-

forth and for ever, let me know Christ for you, for your household, for your commerce, for your political economy, for your public affairs, for the State, for the nation—Christ, the Healer and the Redeemer.”

True ordination takes place by the imposition of the hands of heaven; and they who have not received their commission from Jesus Christ Himself are no ministers at all.





CHAPTER III.

EARLY MINISTRY IN THE WEST.

AS soon as a young man has completed his academical course of preparation for the Gospel ministry, a very important and delicate question at once presents itself for a definite, final answer. Up to this point, perhaps, life has not been a very serious reality. It may have flowed on quite pleasantly, like a stream through the heart of a lovely vale; but now it must take a turn and cut a new bed for itself. Right in front there stands a high rock, and unless great caution is exercised the river of life will here take a wrong course and at last empty itself into the wrong sea. How many a young man has wrecked himself on this rock of difficulty! How often the central ruling disposition of a young man's heart has been unwittingly revealed to the world by his very choice of a parish! It is highly expedient, therefore, it is even absolutely necessary, that every theological student should make a long and solemn pause over the question, "Where shall I go? in what sort of a parish should I make my first settlement?" Upon his solution of this difficult problem will depend very largely his success and usefulness in life. Mr. Beecher, filled through and through with the missionary spirit, placed himself at the disposal of Divine Providence, saying, "I am willing to go whithersoever there is most need of me. I am God's servant, let Him send me where He will. Here am I, O

Lord, send me." Providence sent him out West, to labour among people who were ignorant, indifferent, and spiritually in a state of profound torpor. He went to Lawrenceburg, Dearbon county, Indiana, in 1837, and was settled there as a Presbyterian minister. It was certainly a small beginning; some would call it a mean beginning, not in any respect whatever desirable, but Mr. Beecher himself thinks even now that it was the very best start in life he could possibly have had. It gave him the very introduction to human nature that every earnest young minister needs. Mr. Beecher has given us a most interesting account of the state of religion at Lawrenceburg when he went there, and of the manner in which he at first carried on the work of his ministry. He says: "I went to a small town in Indiana, the last one in the State towards Cincinnati, on the Ohio River. It had perhaps five or six hundred inhabitants. It had in it a Methodist, a Baptist, and this Presbyterian Church to which I went. The church would hold perhaps from two hundred and fifty to three hundred people. It had no lamps and no hymn-books. It had nineteen female members; and the whole congregation could hardly raise from two hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars as salary. I took that field and went to work in it.

"Among the earliest things I did was to beg money from Cincinnati to buy side-lamps to hang up in the church, so that we could have night service. After being there a month or two I went to Cincinnati again, and collected money enough to buy hymn-books. I distributed them in the seats. Before this the hymns had been lined out. I recollect one of the first strokes of management I ever attempted in that parish was in regard to these hymn-books. Instead of asking the people if they were willing to have them, I just put the books into the pews; for there are ten men that will fight a change about which they are consulted to one that will fight it when it has taken place. I simply made the change for them. There was a little looking up and looking round, but nothing was said. So after that we sang out of books. Then there was nobody in the church to light the lamps, and they could not afford to get a sexton.

Such a thing was unknown in the primitive simplicity of that Hoosier time. Well, I unanimously elected myself to be the sexton. I swept out the church, trimmed the lamps, and lighted them. I was literally the light of that church. I did not stop to groan about it, or moan about it, but I did it. At first the men-folk thereabout seemed to think it was chaff to catch them with, or something of that kind; but I went steadily on doing the work. After a month or so two young men, who were clerks in a store there, suggested to me that they would help me. I 'did not think I wanted any help; it was only what one man could do.' Then they suggested three or four of us taking one month each, and in that way they were worked in.

"It was the best thing that ever happened to them. Having something to do in the church was a means of grace to them. It drew them to me and me to them. None of them were Christian young men; but I consulted them about various things, and by-and-bye I brought a case to them. I said, 'Here is a young man who is in danger of going the wrong way and losing his soul. What do you think is the best means of getting at him?' It made them rather sober and thoughtful to be talking about the salvation of that young man's soul, and the upshot was that they saved their own. They very soon afterwards came into the Spirit, and were converted, and became good Christian men.

"Now, while I was there, I preached the best sermons I knew how to get up. I remember distinctly that every Sunday night I had a headache. I went to bed every Sunday night with a vow registered that I would buy a farm and quit the ministry. If I have said it once, I have said it five hundred times, that I spoilt a good farmer to make a poor minister."

He was evidently determined to do as much good to his fellow-beings as he possibly could. It was his "good fortune to be pitched into the ministry headlong, without anything to do but to make men better." All will doubtless agree that there could be no better way of entering the sacred ministry than that. Had he gone into it with any other intention, his whole career would have been a miserable failure, and not an unsurpassed success as it has

unquestionably been. He had a most excellent capital on which to begin the great business of his life—namely, health, strength, good education, zeal, consecration, sympathy with suffering humanity. His stock of theology may not have been very large, but his stock of piety and earnestness was by no means small, and it stood him in good stead. He applied himself with all his might to hard, indomitable mental work. He became a prodigious reader of the old sermonizers. His great favourite, his right-hand man, was South, whom he read through and through, and on whose methods he formed much of his style and handling of texts. He had other bosom friends among the standard authors from whom he obtained a vast amount of instruction and assistance, such as Barrow, Howe, Sherlock, Butler, and Jonathan Edwards particularly. While studying these world-famed sermonizers of the past, he preached many sermons whose framework was founded upon their discourses. But he was far from being satisfied with himself while in this state of apparent bondage to other minds; and after the delivery of many a sermon he would say to himself, "That will never do; I would not preach that again for all the world." However he was learning, and his progress was manifest to all. But it would be a mistake to suppose that it was alone from books he derived help and inspiration even at this time. There was an unwritten volume from which he learned many a lesson of priceless value, and that volume was the daily life of common people. He made it a point to live in constant fellowship with actual life. His habitation was with living men. He would never meet a man on the street that he did not get from him some element for a sermon. Speaking of Lawrenceburg as a good place to train a young minister, he pays a touching tribute to the memory of an old woman who was conspicuously pious, and who exerted a powerful influence upon himself, in these tender beautiful words: "Old mother Rice taught me more practical godliness than any one else, except my own father; and if I had the making of a Catholic calendar, I would enrol her as a saint. She was a labouring-woman, the wife of an old drunken retired sea captain. They were so poor that they had to

live above a cooper's shop, with loose planks for a floor, which wobbled as you walked over them, and through which you could see the men at work below. Her husband would abuse her and swear at her. But there was never any person in distress in the town that Mother Rice did not visit. No case of sickness occurred that she did not consecrate the chamber with her presence. There was nobody who was discouraged and needed comfort that did not experience her kind offices. She was one of the sweetest, gentlest, and serenest of women." By degrees, as he entered into the sympathies and confidences of the people among whom he laboured, his preaching became less irksome and more efficient. His ever-increasing knowledge of the real difficulties and trials and wants of men taught him how to preach to them a gospel of Divine condolence and love. His task was yet difficult, but there was a joy in the effort to perform it that upheld and encouraged his heart. He grew courageous, and more loving and sympathetic, and the work of the Lord prospered in his hands. Souls were saved, believers were strengthened, doubters were confirmed, infidels were convinced, sorrowing hearts were comforted, and pastor and people were knit together in mutual sympathy and affection. They dwelt together in unity and peace, reflecting upon the community the light and holiness of their common Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Immediately after his settlement at Lawrenceburg, Mr. Beecher was married to Miss Bullard, sister of the Rev. Dr. Bullard of St. Louis, who was killed in a railway accident at Gasconade Bridge, of Rev. Asa Bullard of Boston, and of the Rev. E. Bullard, Vermont. It was a love-marriage, and resulted in great happiness and comfort. Mrs. Beecher remains to this day, and is noted for her common sense and practical piety. She is well-known in the States as a writer on matters relating to domestic economy, and many of her beautiful and edifying articles have been republished in England. They have had a large family of children, most of whom died while they were yet young.

In the fall of 1839 Mr. Beecher left Lawrenceburg, having accepted a call to Indianapolis, in the same State, a small town of about 4000 inhabitants. The sphere of

his ministry was much more extensive here, however, than at Lawrenceburg, and it was his ambition to devote himself with his whole heart to the noble work of saving souls. His great care was to improve himself as a preacher, conscious that if he were to accomplish anything in life it must be done chiefly through preaching. But *how* was he to preach? What was the best method? The object was grand and sublime; but how was he to reach it? Was the conventional style of preaching the true one? Let us see how he solved the problem: "I remember the first sermon I ever preached. I had preached a good many sermons before, too. But I remember the first real one. I had preached a good while as I had used my gun. I used to go out hunting by myself, and I had great success in firing off my gun; and the game enjoyed it as much as I did, for I never hit them or hurt them. I fired off my gun as I see hundreds of men firing off their sermons. I loaded it, and bang!—there was a smoke, a report, but nothing fell; and so it was again and again. I recollect one day in the fields my father pointing out a little red squirrel, and said to me, 'Henry, would you like to shoot him?' I trembled all over, but I said, 'Yes.' He got down on his knee, put the gun across a rail, and said, 'Henry, keep perfectly cool, perfectly cool: take aim.' And I did; and I fired, and over went the squirrel, and he did not run away either. That was the first thing I ever hit; and I felt an inch taller, as a boy that had killed a squirrel, and knew how to aim a gun.

"I had preached two years and a half at Lawrenceburg, in Indiana (and some sporadic sermons before that), when I went to Indianapolis. While there I was much discontented. I had been discontented for two years. I had expected that there would be a general public interest, and especially in the week before the communion season. In the West we had protracted meetings, and the people would come up to a high point of feeling; but I never could get them beyond that. They would come down again, and there would be no conversions. I sent for Dr. Stowe to come down and help me; but he would not come, for he thought it better for me to bear the yoke myself. When I had lived at Indianapolis the first year, I said, 'There was a reason why when the apostles preached they

succeeded, and I will find it out if it is to be found out.' I took every single instance in the Record where I could find one of their sermons, and analysed it, and asked myself, 'What were the circumstances? who were the people? what did he do?' and I studied the sermons until I got this idea: that the apostles were accustomed first to feel for a ground on which the people and they stood together; a common ground where they could meet. Then they stored up a large number of the particulars of knowledge that belonged to everybody; and when they had got that knowledge which everybody would admit placed in a proper form before their minds, then they brought it to bear upon them with all their excited heart and feeling. That was the first definite idea of taking aim that I had in my mind. 'Now,' said I, 'I will make a sermon so.' I remember it just as well as if it were yesterday. First, I sketched out the things we all know. 'You all know you are living in a world perishing under your feet. You all know that time is extremely uncertain; that you cannot tell whether you will live a month or a week. You all know that your destiny in the life that is to come depends upon the character you are forming in this life;' and in that way I went on with my 'you all knows,' until I had about forty of them. When I had got through that, I turned round and brought it to bear upon them with all my might; and there were seventeen men awakened under that sermon. I never felt so triumphant in my life. I cried all the way home. I said to myself, 'Now I know how to preach.' I could not make another sermon for a month that was good for anything. I had used all my powder and shot on that one. But, for the first time in my life, I had got the idea of taking aim. I soon added to it the idea of analysing the people I was preaching to, and so taking aim for specialities. Of course that came gradually and later, with growing knowledge and experience."

It was a grand discovery. To know how to preach well and effective, so as to touch and move the hearts of men, and make them work for truth and righteousness, is indeed to be a second Christ on the earth. But it is not a knowledge that can be easily acquired. "It is easier to study law and

become a successful practitioner, it is easier to study medicine and become a successful practitioner, than it is to study the human soul all through—to know its living forms, and to know the way of talking to it and coming into sympathy with it.” What a mistake to imagine that anybody, however scanty his endowments, may become a minister. The ministry is unquestionably the most difficult of all the professions. Blessed, therefore, thrice blessed is he who knows how to preach.

Mr. Beecher's first *real* sermon, he tells us, was the means of awakening seventeen persons there and then ; but that was by no means the measure of its true efficiency. Its mission did not stop with its delivery, but went on, no doubt, through weeks and months and possibly years, doing glorious work for the Master, both by working spiritual transformations in the hearts and consciences and lives of many of those who heard it, and by sweetening the spirit and strengthening the courage of the preacher himself. He was quite another man after that day. He still had to toil and labour as hard and as earnestly as before, but his joyousness of spirit was increased tenfold. He was in partnership with the Almighty. He was a steward of Jesus Christ. His vocation was to sacrifice himself on the altar of agonising vicarious suffering. He was not his own. The love of the crucified Christ shed abroad in his heart constrained him to make himself all things to all men, that thereby he might win some to the higher life of faith, hope, and love. Here is a case in point, but only one out of a hundred that might be cited : “I had a man in my parish in Indiana who was a very ugly fellow. He had a wife and daughter who were awakened during the revival which was then working, and, while visiting others who needed instruction, I went to see and talk with them. He heard that I had been in his house, and shortly afterwards I passed down the street in which he lived. He was sitting on the fence ; and of all the filth that was ever emptied on a young minister's head, I received my share. He threw it out, right and left, up and down, and said everything that was calculated to harrow my pride. I was very wholesomely indignant for a young man. I said to myself, ‘Look here,

I will be revenged on you yet.' He told me I should never darken his door again, to which I responded that I never would until I had his invitation to do so. Things went on for some time. I met him on the street, bowed to him, spoke well of him, and never repeated his treatment of me to any one. We constantly crossed each other's paths, and often visited the same people. I always spoke kindly of him. Very soon he ran for the office of sheriff, and then I went out into the field and worked for him. I canvassed for votes; I used my personal influence. It was a pretty close election, but he was elected. When he knew I was working for him, I never saw a man so utterly perplexed as he was. He did not know what to make of it. He came to me one day, awkward and stumbling, and undertook to 'make up,' as the saying is. He said he would be very glad to have me call and see him. I congratulated him on his election, and of course accepted his overtures; and from that time forth I never had a faster friend in the world than he was. Now, I might have thrown stones at him from the topmost cliffs of Mount Sinai, and hit him every time, but that would not have done him any good. Kindness killed him. I won his confidence."

It was while in Indianapolis that he first took part in a revival. It was the most important event in his life, and the one that made the deepest, most lasting impression upon his mind. Dr. Jewett, a brother minister at Terre Haute, a town on the east bank of the river Wabash, some seventy-eight miles west-south-west of Indianapolis, sent for him to help in a work of unusual interest which had been started in his church. At first Mr. Beecher hesitated, persuading himself to believe that he could not go. He felt helpless and extremely wretched. He had never laboured in a revival before, and had not seen one since he was a little boy. He had no effective sermons. Although by nature impulsive, ardent, fiery, and eager, burning to be employed in some exciting work, he was now as weak and as helpless as a sucking babe. The Lord had never called him to such a work. At length, however, the urgency of the invitation, the kind but earnest pleading of his office-bearers, and the

imperative command of his conscience, compelled him to start. He rode for two days over lonely roads, through beech forests, in a dazed and wondering state. Hardly was he off his saddle before brother Jewett was at his elbow, and said, "You have done well to come. You must preach to-night." In a moment the cloud lifted. The reluctance was gone. He was there three weeks working with indefatigable zeal and wondrous success. Here is his own account of that glorious time: "I used to get up early in the morning, and immediately after breakfast take a horse and ride from house to house and converse with people. I worked in that way till ten o'clock. Between ten and eleven I attended the daily prayer-meeting that was held there. Then I rode with the pastor till dinner-time. After dinner I rested till evening, when I attended another meeting. This I continued for two or three weeks."

The memory of that first revival is fresh in his mind to this day. In thinking of it very lately, while standing for the first time since on the very identical spot, he exclaimed, "Three memorable weeks, at a time when events stamp the memory and the heart as the die stamps the coin. I could almost take those days, one after another, in their order, and tell you just what I did. Those days were almost without selfness, and yet they are clear to my memory. They stand out—ribs, bones, and all."

However heartily and enthusiastically he may have thrown himself into that revival, evangelistic work, and however great his delight in it may have been, it was necessary at length to turn the face homewards; but "when the time came to return home, did ever heart swell with stronger and more unutterable feeling? To go back to the ordinary round of church life from this glowing centre seemed so intolerable that my whole nature and all my soul rose up in uncontrollable prayer. Through the beech woods, sometimes crying, sometimes singing, and always praying, I rode in one long controversy with God. 'Slay me if Thou wilt, but do not send me home to barrenness. Thou *shalt* go with me. I will not be refused. I am not afraid of Thee! I will prevail or die!' These and even wilder strains went through the soul." Such earnestness and im-

portunity in prayer, such intense going out of the whole soul towards God, could not have been in vain. Our Father in heaven invariably listens to such pleading. It was another Jacob struggling with the Angel; and the result in this instance could not possibly have been otherwise than it was in the first.

When he arrived home his heart burned within him, and he had no doubt whatever but that the Lord would bless him. It was a crisis. Success or death was at the door, and an internal voice secured him that it was the former. Oh! how he rejoiced in the prospect of having a revival in his own city and in his own church! It would be nothing in the world but heaven on earth. Well, a revival did come, and this was the manner of its coming: "On Sunday I gave notice that I would preach every night that week. We had a dingy lecture-room in my church that would hold about two hundred people. I preached Monday night, and we had a storm. Tuesday night it rained again, and when I called upon any who were awakened to remain, no one stayed: and I said, 'It makes no difference; if the Lord wishes it to be so, I do!' On Wednesday night I preached again with more power, and called for inquirers at the close. One poor little thin servant girl stopped! She smelt of the kitchen and looked kitchen all over. When I dismissed the congregation, my first feeling, I know, as I went towards her, was one of disappointment. I said to myself, that after so much work it was too bad. It was just a glance, an arrow which the devil shot at me, but which went past. The next minute I had an overwhelming revulsion in my soul, and I said to myself, 'If God pleases, I will work for the poorest of His creatures. I will work for the heart of a vagabond if I am permitted to do it, and bring him to Christ Jesus.' I felt it, and I thanked God that night for that girl's staying. He paid me the next night, for two of my sweetest children—not my own, but they were like my own to me—stopped on the next night, and after that the work went on."

His interest in revival and evangelistic work became intense. Nothing afforded him so much pleasure and delight as to be engaged in special efforts to save and to

elevate mankind round about him. It was his meat and drink to go in and out among them as an ambassador for Christ, pleading with them, even with tears in his eyes, to become reconciled to God. The centre of his theology was Emmanuel, God with us, and the central fact in his preaching was the incarnation, God made manifest in the flesh. Himself exceedingly loving, sympathetic, and forgiving in disposition, nothing laid such a deep hold of his heart as the thought of the infinite love of God in Christ Jesus. Men were low and sinful, and self-centred, absorbed in the interests of this life; but God loved them and was patient with them, and it was his blessed mission to press this truth home to their hearts. In order, therefore, to bring all the influences within his reach to bear upon them, he would hold special services, and preach daily for a number of weeks, and sometimes through several months. The success of one revival was so encouraging that the meetings were continued for eighteen consecutive months without the exception of a single day. During the whole of that time he was in the happiest of moods, thrilled through and through with unspeakable rapture. Conversions were frequent and numerous. The most desperate characters were brought to their right mind. On every side the old cry of the Philippian jailer was raised, "What shall I do to be saved?" and was followed in almost every instance with prompt and glad obedience to the old-fashioned but only comfort-giving answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." What wonder that the young minister's heart leaped within him for joy! He was indeed the happiest man living. No exertion was too much. No duty was too heavy. Cross-bearing was a joy. His heart was right before God. His ministry at Indianapolis was attended with many such revivals. He believed most thoroughly in their genuineness, and still believes; and it was his conviction that every minister ought to employ all possible means to develop them in his own church. In a recent lecture on the conduct of revivals he makes use of this language: "As to the means that are to be employed to develop a revival in the church, first and foremost I mention preaching; and, in order to this, much

depends on your own state of mind. I think that almost always a man has in his own heart the prophecy of these things. I have waked up in spring mornings, and the air has smelt differently from what it did before. I have gone out of doors not thinking that it was spring, but it was brought home to me by the changed aspect of things around. So I have found in my own ministry, that when my heart was right for this work of God, I somehow had it brought to me in a way which inspired courage and zeal and purpose; an intensity of feeling that assured me I was going to succeed, —not I, but the grace of God that was in me. I had a courage, a sort of certitude in me—‘the time has come! the time has come!’—and I went down into the work with the feeling, ‘I will not be denied! I will have this blessing! Slay me, but give me this!’ And where a man has even the smallest beginnings of this feeling, he is pretty sure to impart it.” There is a question, however, in this connection which is often very perplexing to those who have the conduct of evangelistic meetings, which it will be better both to ask and to answer in Mr. Beecher’s own words. He says: “How long ought they to be protracted? Just as long as you want them. Four-day meetings? Yes; four days, or eight days, or twelve days, or sixteen days, or twenty-four days, or forty-eight days. You own all the time there is, and you can keep them up as long as they are profitable. Suppose my boy should come to me and ask, ‘Father, how long ought I to shake the chestnut tree?’ ‘As long as the chestnuts fall; as long as there is a chestnut left,’ I say to him. ‘Shake till you can get no more nuts. As long as they fall, club it.’ I remember in one case carrying on a protracted meeting in my own parish for over eight, nine, ten weeks; and when on Sunday morning I made up my mind to close the series of meetings, I had looked over the congregation and could count but ten that were not hopeful Christians.”

But how was he able to retain health and vigour under those heavy and continuous labours? Ordinary men, if called upon to work so hard and unremittingly, would certainly break down, and that very soon. To preach every day without a single exception through eighteen consecutive months is a task which no man can accomplish without

damaging his constitution, unless he can find relaxation of some sort. Mr. Beecher's method of giving himself rest was very peculiar and amusing. Those who have read his sermons know that some of his most beautiful and striking illustrations are drawn from horticulture. He is perfectly at home among fruits and flowers. On his farm at Peekskill he has one of the best gardens in America; and on matters relating to farming and gardening he is considered an authority. But how did he cultivate his taste for these things? How did he acquire such exhaustive knowledge of them? We subjoin his own explanation, which was written in 1859:—

“The continued taxation of daily preaching, extending through months, and once through eighteen consecutive months without the exception of a single day, began to wear upon the nerves, and made it necessary for us to seek some relaxation. Accordingly we used, after each week-night's preaching, to drive the sermon out of our heads by some alterative reading.

“In the State Library were Loudon's works—his encyclopædias of Horticulture, of Agriculture, and of Architecture. We fell upon them, and for years almost monopolised them. In our little one-story cottage, after the day's work was done, we pored over these monuments of an almost incredible industry, and read, we suppose, not only every line, but much of it many times over, until at length we had a topographical knowledge of many of the fine English estates quite as intimate, we daresay, as was possessed by many of their truant owners. There was something exceedingly pleasant, and is yet, in the studying over mere catalogues of flowers, trees, fruits, etc.

“A seedman's list, a nurseryman's catalogue, are more fascinating to us than any story. In this way, through several years, we gradually accumulated materials and became familiar with facts and principles which paved the way for editorial labours. Lindley's Horticulture and Gray's Structural Botany came in as constant companions. And when at length, through a friend's liberality, we became the recipients of the “London Gardener's Chronicle,” edited by Professor Lindley, our treasures were inestimable. Many hundred times have we lain awake for hours unable

to throw off the excitement of preaching, and beguiling the time with imaginary visits to the Chiswick Garden, to the more than oriental magnificence of the Duke of Devonshire's grounds at Chatsworth. We have had long discussions in that little bedroom at Indianapolis with Van Mons about pears, with Vibert about roses, with Thompson and Knight of fruits and theories of vegetable life, and with Loudon about everything under the heavens in the horticultural world.

"This employment of waste hours not only answered a purpose of soothing excited nerves then, but brought us into such relations to the material world, that we speak with entire moderation when we say that all the estates of the richest duke in England could not have given us half the pleasure which we have derived from pastures, waysides, and unoccupied prairies."

His Western life was a perfect fascination from beginning to end. It is true that he was not free from trials, disappointments, bereavements, and temptations; but the grace of God and his own hopeful buoyant disposition enabled him to endure them all with the most wonderful serenity of spirit. All his days were as transparent as a summer sky. Clouds never intervened between him and God. Was he not God's heir? Did he not work for God and his race? Why should he go mourning every day? Is not Christianity a joy-giving religion? His only concern was to be faithful in the discharge of duty, and being faithful and true to the best of his ability, he had no reason to be downcast and melancholy. How full of pathos are his many references to his early experiences in the West! How he delights to tell the world of those old-fashioned and real conversions at Indianapolis! In 1877 he visited the scene of his early ministry, and the following are the thoughts that ran through his mind on the occasion:—

"I went to Indianapolis, Indiana, in the fall of 1839, with a little sick babe in my arms, who showed the first symptom of recovery after eating blackberries which I gathered by the way! The city had then a population of 4000. At no time during my residence did it outreach 5000. Behold it to-day with 110,000 inhabitants! The

Great National Road, which was at that time of great importance, since sunk into forgetfulness, ran through the city, and constituted the main street. With the exception of two or three streets, there were no ways along which could not be seen the original stumps of the forest. I have bumped against them in a buggy too often not to be well assured of the fact.

"Here I preached my first *real* sermon; here, for the first time, I strove against death in behalf of a child, and was defeated; here I built a house and painted it with my own hands; here I had my first garden, and became the bishop of flowers for this diocese; here I first joined the editorial fraternity, and edited the "Farmer and Gardener;" here I had my first full taste of chills and fever; here, for the first and last time, I waded to church ankle-deep in mud, and preached with pantaloons tucked into my boots. All is changed now.

"In search for my obscure little ten-foot cottage I got lost. So changed was everything that I groped over familiar territory like a blind man in a strange city. It is no longer *my* Indianapolis, with the aboriginal forest fringing the town, with pasture-fields lying right across from my house; without coal, without railroads, without a stone big enough to throw at a cat. It was a joyful day and a precious gift when Calvin Fletcher allowed me to take from the fragments of stone used to make foundations for the State Bank a piece large enough to put in my pork-barrel. I left Indianapolis for Brooklyn on the very day upon which the cars on the Madison Railroad for the first time entered the town; and I departed on the first train that ever left the place. On a wood car, rigged up with boards across from side to side, went I forth.

"It is now a mighty city, full of foundries, manufactories, wholesale stores, a magnificent court-house, beautiful dwellings, noble churches, wide and fine streets, and railroads more than I could name radiating to every point of the compass.

"The old academy where I preached for a few months is gone, but the church into which the congregation soon entered is still standing on the Governor's Circle. No one

can look upon that building as I do. A father goes back to his first house, though it be but a cabin, where his children were born, with feelings which never can be transferred to any other place. As I looked long and yearningly upon that homely building the old time came back again. I stood in the crowded lecture-room as on the night when the current of religious feeling first was beginning to flow. Talk of a young mother's feelings over her first babe—what is that compared with the solemnity, the enthusiasm, the impetuosity of gratitude, of humility, of singing gladness, with which a young pastor greets the incoming of his first revival? He stands upon the shore to see the tide come in. It is the movement of the infinite, ethereal tide. It is from the other world. There is no colour like heart-colour. The homeliest things dipped in that for ever after glow with celestial hues. The hymns that we sang in sorrow or in joy and triumph in that humble basement have never lost a feather, but fly back and forth between the soul and heaven, plumed as never was any bird of Paradise.

"I stood and looked at the homely old building, and saw a procession of forms going in and out that the outward eye will never see again. Judge Morris, Samuel Merrill, Oliver H. Smith, D. V. Cully, John L. Ketcham, Coburn, Fletcher, Bates, Bullard, Munsel, Ackley, O'Neil, and many many more. There have been hours when there was not a hand-breadth between us and the saintly host in the invisible church. In the heat and pressure of later years the memories of those early days have been laid aside, but not effaced. They rise as I stand, and move in a gentle procession before me. No outward history is comparable to the soul's inward life; of the soul's inward life no part is so sublime as its eminent religious developments. And the pastor who walks with men, delivering them from thrall, aspersing their sorrow with tears, kindling his own heart as a torch to light the way for those who would see the invisible, has, of all men, the most transcendent heart-histories. I have seen much of life since I trod that threshold for the last time, but nothing has dimmed my love, nor has any later or riper experience taken away the bloom and sanctity of my early love; and can truly say of

hundreds, 'For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Jesus Christ I have begotten you through the Gospel.'

"But other incidents arise. The days of sickness, chills, and fever; the gardening days, my first editorial experiences, my luck in horses and pigs, my house-building, and not a few scrapes; being stalled in mud, half-drowned in crossing rivers, long, lonely forest rides, camp-meetings, preachings in cabins, sleepings in the open air.

"I was reminded of one comical experience as I was seeking on Market Street to find the old swale or shallow ravine which ran between my cottage and Mr. Bates's dwelling. It had formerly been a kind of bayou in spring, when the stream above town overflowed, but dried off in summer. To redeem it from unhealth, a dyke had been built to restrain the river and turn the superfluous freshets another way. But one year the levee gave way in the night, and when the morning rose, behold a flood between me and my neighbour. There was sport on hand. It was too deep for wading, but I could extemporise a boat. I brought down to the edge my wife's large washing-tub, and intended with a bit of board to paddle about. No sooner was I in than I was out. The tub refused to stand on its own bottom. Well, well, said I, two tubs are better than one. So I got its mate, and nailing two strips across to hold them fast together, I was sure that they were too long now to upset. So they were, in the long line; but sideways they went over, carrying me with them with incredible celerity. Tubs were one thing, boats another; that I saw plainly.

"I would not be baffled. I proposed a raft. Getting rails from the fence, I soon tacked boards across—enough of them to carry my weight. Then, with a long pole, I began my voyage. Alas! it came to a ludicrous end.

"A rail fence ran across this ravine in the field just above the street. One end of the fence had loosened, and the water had floated it round enough to break its connection with its hither side. A large but young dog belonging to a friend had walked along the fence hoping to cross dry-footed, till he came to the abrupt termination, and his courage failing him he had crouched down and lay

trembling and whining, afraid to go back or to venture the water. I poled my raft to the rescue, and getting alongside, coaxed him to jump aboard, but his courage was all gone. He looked up wistfully, but stirred not. 'Well, you coward, you *shall* come aboard.' Seizing him by the skin of the neck I hauled him on to the raft, which instantly began to sink. It was buoyant enough for a man, but not for a man and lubberly dog. There was nothing for it—as the stupid thing would not stir, I had to ; and with a spring I reached the fence just abdicated by the dog, while he, the raft now coming to the surface again, went sailing down the pond, and was safely landed below, while I was left in the crotch of the fence. One such experiment ought to serve for a lifetime—but alas !”





CHAPTER IV.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH.

CONGREGATIONALISM has not had a very brilliant history in the United States. It is one of the smallest sects in the whole country. It has manifested no tendency to spread and fill the land as Methodism has done. Although some maintain with much vigour and zeal that it is the best system of church government ever conceived—the best in itself, and especially the best suited to the genius and habits of American society—the fact still remains that it has signally failed to take possession of the Western Republic. From reliable and official statistics prepared by the Rev. Dr. Quint, and published in the “Congregational Quarterly” for January 1873, we learn that the number of churches was 3263, of ministers 3201, and of communicants 318,916, with about 400,000 children in Sabbath schools. In New England, however, Congregationalism has always been the ruling sect. Dr. Schaff, a thoroughly unbiassed judge, assures us that “it has exerted, and still exerts, a beneficial influence upon the religious, social, and political life of the whole country.” Within that boundary its history has been exceedingly intense and supremely exciting. Its continued conflict with Unitarianism within and with infidelity without; its relations to the State, and at one period its identity with the same; its long and bitter controversy with extreme Arminianism and Antinomianism;

its unflinching adherence to the Bible as the only rule of faith and conduct—these things are known to every student of ecclesiastical history. But the great success it has achieved in New England is not in the least surprising when we remember that it was there the Pilgrim Fathers first settled, to whom Congregationalism was as dear as their own souls. Those heroic and glorious men leavened the very soil of New England with Congregational principles and convictions. Landing on Plymouth Rock on the 25th of December 1620, aflame with sincerest gratitude to Jehovah for His kind care and protection, one of their first acts was to organise a church wherein to worship. From that day down to this Congregationalism has seen an unparalleled prosperity in the New England States. But it has never flourished to any great extent in other parts of the country. It seems to suit the New England soil, and no other. Forty years ago the number of Independent Churches in the Middle States was extremely small. Even in Brooklyn, N.Y., the denomination was wholly unrepresented. Doubtless there were many Congregationalists residing in the city, natives of Boston, New Haven, Portland, and other New England districts; but at first they did not think it expedient to organise a church. Most of them identified themselves with the Presbyterians, whose Confession of Faith was the same as their own, and among whom they felt quite at home. But as their number increased they began to feel as if they would like to return to their old forms of worship, not that they were by any means tired of or dissatisfied with existing churches, but that there was something drawing them irresistibly toward the church of their fathers. They loved it with an attachment too sacred for expression. It was to them the only perfect church. "They revered its honoured names of John Robinson, and Bradford, and Miles Standish, and the gentle Lady Arabella, 'who took New England on her way to heaven.' They loved its mossy memories of Holland and Delft Haven, and the "Mayflower's" cabin. They could remember no Gothic pile, nor groined arch, nor trained choirs, nor pealing anthems; but dear memories they had of a temple built in the wilderness, and arched by a foreign sky. Its corner-stone was a rock

at Plymouth ; the snows of December carpeted its floor, and the bleak winds of winter, sighing through the primeval and leafless woods that were its columns, blended with the Pilgrim's song of praise to form the sublime ritual of that early church." Strenuous efforts were therefore made to establish a Congregational Church in Brooklyn, "the city of churches." But failure seemed for many a year to be the only reward ; and some were led to suppose that Congregationalism could not succeed out of New England. At length, however, the dawn began to break, and in 1844 the Church of the Pilgrims was founded, which sprang at once into eminence, and boldly took its stand as one of the chief churches in the land. In 1845 it secured a faithful and efficient pastor in the Rev. Richard S. Storrs, who continues to serve it to the present day, and who is now well known both in America and Great Britain. There is scarcely a minister on either side of the Atlantic who has not read and derived benefit from his admirable little book, entitled, "Conditions of Success in Preaching without Notes."

In the month of June 1847, nine members of Dr. Storrs's church were dismissed to unite with a few others in starting a new cause. Little did those people dream what would be the result of their action. They had no idea that they were giving being to a society that would shortly become known throughout Christendom. They were entirely in the dark as to the issue of their work. As soon as they had organised, they began to look about for a suitable minister. They searched near and far, and made innumerable inquiries. They were told of a certain young man who was then labouring with marked success in the far West. His father was pretty well known throughout the length and breadth of the land ; but as to himself, his fame was as yet confined to his own State. But he was a man of unbounded promise. He was a born genius. His resources could never be exhausted. And he would certainly grow and develop. Satisfied as to these things, the new church, which was at best but an offshoot from another church not much older than itself, ventured to give him an unanimous call ; and Henry Ward Beecher was severed from his happy home in the West and from the Presbyterian body at the same time.

It was a most important and hazardous change. Many of Mr. Beecher's best friends had solemnly urged him to stay where he was, assuring him that such a change would be disastrous to his future usefulness. Not a few had consoled him with predictions of total failure. Some had pointed to the fact that the church was an untried experiment, and warned him against meddling with mere experiments. But he was calm and firm in the midst of all, satisfied to abide the consequences of his own independent action. Undaunted alike by the kind dissuasions of friends and the cruel predictions of enemies, he entered upon the arduous duties of his new position with his whole heart and soul. He was installed pastor of Plymouth Church in October 1847. His first sermon was from Ecclesiastes xii. 14, and it was characterised by great earnestness, solemnity, directness, and power. It gave entire satisfaction to all. It was not a theological essay, as too many sermons were in that day, but a living, burning appeal to the heart and the conscience; not an interesting and instructive lecture, but a voice, an echo from the other world, summoning the hearers to stand face to face with God and the claims of the higher life. People perceived that the preacher was in dead earnest. Crowds flocked to hear him. There was no building in the whole city large enough to hold the thousands that were eager and anxious for the Word of Life as it came from his lips. His fame spread abroad on every hand. He at once became the most popular man of the day. Professor Fowler in his interesting volume, "The American Pulpit," writing in 1856, makes use of the following language in reference to Plymouth Church and its pastor: "Here gather twice on every Sabbath of the year, except during the summer solstice, about twenty-five hundred people, and the audience sometimes numbers three thousand. It is not unusual for the capacious body of the church, the broad galleries, the second elevated gallery, the several aisles, and all vacancies about pulpit and doors, to be occupied by eager listeners, and sometimes hundreds turn away unable to find footing within the audience-room. And this is no novel fact. It has been a fact for six years. Its persistence imparts to it the dignity of

a moral phenomenon. It is unprecedented in the history of audiences, whether religious, literary, political, or artistical. What in truth is it? It is not that an orator attracts a crowd. That is often done. But it is, that twice on each Sabbath of six years from two to three thousand people centre to an *unchanged* attraction. No dramatic genius, no melodious voice, no popular eloquence has ever done so much as that. Neither Macready, nor Garrick, nor Jenny Lind, nor Rachel, nor Gough, nor Clay, nor Choate has done it. The theatre must change its 'star' monthly, the singer must migrate often, the orator must make 'angel visits' to concentrate three thousand people. And the phenomenon is the more remarkable, in that this gathering is around the pulpit, where no art wins and no pleasure stimulates; and furthermore, it occurs when hundreds of other audience-rooms are opened for the same purpose with pulpits suitably supplied, while competition must be banished before the stars of art can fill three thousand seats for a single evening. What is it that makes Plymouth Church an exception to all churches and to all audience-rooms? Is it because the pastor, Henry Ward Beecher, is the most eloquent man, or the most learned man, or the most godly man among the clergy? Neither is true of him. When these audiences began, 'novelty' was assigned by some as the attraction, and 'wit' by others; but six years has ruined the one, and seekers for the other find attendance a too serious business. This question may well be pondered by all churches and in all pulpits, for it certainly is of moment to know the secret of Mr. Beecher's attraction when the serious problem of the day is this matter of public worship."

It is now upwards of thirty years since Mr. Beecher came to Brooklyn, but at no period was his popularity greater than it is at present. Plymouth Church is no longer the largest place of worship in the country, but it is still the most important and influential. Dr. Talmage's Tabernacle will accommodate about twice as many people, and the same is true of Mr. Spurgeon's celebrated Metropolitan Tabernacle, and both these places are filled to overflowing every Sabbath; but, as far at least as America is concerned, it may still be

safely said that no man living exerts such a mighty influence over the people at large as Mr. Beecher. Be the weather what it may, hot or cold, dry or wet, Plymouth Church is always full. He is pre-eminently the "people's preacher." New York merchants inform us that the majority of their customers, coming from all parts of the country, speak of attending Mr. Beecher's church as a necessary part of their trip East. "Are you going to hear Beecher?" is a question invariably put to every stranger in the city. Travellers make it a point to hear him either in the pulpit or at the prayer meeting. In fact there are in his congregation every Sabbath hundreds of strangers listening to him for the first time, and he never fails to impress every one of them that he is in thorough earnest about the business of preaching. Many who enter the church with a strong prejudice against him, depart with the conviction that he is neither a sensationalist nor a heretic, but a messenger for Christ, pleading with men in Christ's stead to become reconciled to God. Some time ago a New England clergyman went to hear him for the first time in his life. He was an elderly man, considerably over seventy, and had done good work in his day as a pastor in Eastern Connecticut. He had been actively engaged in a good many revivals, and had often advocated their utility and necessity. When he heard of the Plymouth pastor he was very greatly exercised about him, lest his preaching was not quite up, as the phrase was, to the "Gospel standard." In his solicitude he came to hear him. Entering the church at the usual hour he was not a little surprised to find it filled to overflowing, and to be compelled himself to remain in the aisle throughout the service. But no sooner had the preacher began his discourse than our New England divine felt the subtle charm and power of his impassioned oratory; and it was not long until he was so absorbed as to forget himself and give manifest expression to his emotions. He was utterly overpowered. After the sermon he met one of the members of the church, a friend of former days, and said, "I came to hear your minister." "Well, how do you like him?" With distinctive emphasis he replied, "He is a *godly man*. Don't you have a *revival* here *all the time*?"

Good, honest, earnest, faithful preaching never fails to

influence the human mind. Given a pious, God-fearing, able minister, and the prosperity of the church under his charge is secured. God never withholds His blessing from such a man. If asked, What is the secret of the wonderful success of Plymouth Church? our answer would be, *God's blessing on consecrated talent.* Ministers, if divinely called and sent, are organs through which the Almighty works; and it is self-evident that, humanly speaking, the quantity of work done will correspond with the quality and power of the organ employed. A man of genius, one who is endowed with ten shining talents, if enriched withal by the grace of God, is in the very nature of things destined to be more successful in the Christian ministry than a man of one talent, however pious and eager and faithful he may be. In every age and country of the world, and under every dispensation, there has always been an aristocracy of talent, a noble peerage of power and efficiency, which is not in the power of man to annihilate. It is rooted in the very constitution of humanity, and all the laws of heaven and earth recognise and respect it. Mr. Beecher is an illustrious member of this God-ordained nobility. He is in very truth a superior man, and the Lord has employed him to do superior work in his own superior way. He is neither a heretic nor a sensationalist, but a truly great man bringing to bear upon his fellow-beings all the wealth of his nature in order to influence them for righteousness and truth. He is Christ's servant, and the grand object of his life is to magnify his Master's name. He has consecrated all his energies, all the passion and poetry of his soul, to the glorious mission of preaching the everlasting gospel. The secret of his success, therefore, is the sanctification of his genius by the Lord Jesus Christ. Speaking on this general question at a Friday evening service some time ago, he said: "I do not underrate the gifts of judgment and experience; but it seems to me that if I might be permitted to pass a judgment upon myself, I should say that, were I to have taken away from me the sense of living by faith in the Son of God, and the feeling that all I have been, all I am, and all I expect to be, I owe to the love of Christ; if I were to have taken away from me the sense which I have of immortality in Christ, and the consciousness that day by day I am drawing nearer

to Him, that I work for Him, that I hang upon Him with all my heart, and that every hope I have culminates in Him—if I were to have taken away from me that sense, I believe that all other things in me would collapse. I should be like Samson, shorn of his hair and powerless. It is from Christ I believe that I derive my strength to labour successfully among you.”

Again, referring to the church itself: “It would be affectation for any of us to attempt to disguise the fact that Plymouth Church is known throughout Christendom. Your name is known in the country of the Alps as well as in our own country. It is known throughout the kingdom of Great Britain as well as throughout the State of New York. The question is, What is the secret, what are the sources, of influence and power here in this church? There have been various theories about it. One thinks it is sensationalism. Another thinks it is a fervent domestic affection. Another thinks it is something else. I believe the secret and root of your history lies in one single word, and that is CHRIST. Far as you are from perfectness, far as we all are from representing Christ truly, I believe that in the services of the pulpit, in the services of the prayer-meetings, and in the private experience of home religion, to an unusual extent, and to an unusual degree of depth, the name of Christ has been precious. Nay, the heart of Christ has been powerful among us. And this is what I should be glad to have known abroad, namely, that a church which is thronged, and a church whose name, although it is of comparatively recent establishment, is almost co-extensive with Christendom, derives its power primarily and chiefly from the living presence of Christ in its midst.”

Mr. Beecher's whole business is preaching. He is not in any sense a pastor. In his Western parishes he no doubt visited extensively among the people; but since he came to Brooklyn he has been compelled to relinquish pastoral visiting altogether, and devote himself entirely to the work of preaching and lecturing. He still believes, however, in the necessity and usefulness of pastoral visitation, and would practice it himself if circumstances allowed. Here is his own testimony on this interesting subject: “The great taxation of brain under which I am continually kept in the organisa-

tion of material for my ministerial work and for my public work outside of the pulpit, uses up my strength to such an extent that I cannot be a pastor. I cannot go from house to house. If I do, I cannot preach in the pulpit. I have strength enough to fill either the office of preacher or that of pastor, but not enough to fill both in so great a congregation as this ; and I have simply not attempted the pastoral work. But, though there are many disadvantages arising from this fact, it has not been so disastrous as it would have been, if it had not been for the fidelity of the brethren of the church. There are a great many good women in the church who use their religious and social influence for the benefit of those who need succour and advice and help, and there are a great many brethren in the church who have been very faithful ; so that, on an average, I think there has been as much pastoral work done in this church as in any ordinary church. And in thus making up for the want of a pastor, the brethren of this church are doing just what every Congregational church ought to do. The church is pastor in the sense that one member takes care of another. And I have looked upon the labours of the brethren during the past year with great gratitude to God." His only concern is that the work is done, and done well. If the minister has the time to do it himself, let him by all means do it ; but if his congregation is large, and his brain is taxed to its utmost capacity in organising material for his sermons, let him develop the talent of his members, and teach them to interest themselves in visiting those who need visitation, and making themselves generally useful in the kingdom of their Lord Christ. In any case, it would be suicidal to the life of a church to neglect the pastoral work. This work *must* be done ; if not by the minister himself, then by somebody else. On the other hand, there are some ministers who are qualified only for the prosecution of the work of house-to-house visitation ; and it might be well for some of them to secure help in the pulpit, either from among their own members or from some foreign source, and apply themselves almost exclusively to the task of instructing their people individually and personally at their own homes.

But, it may be asked, why does Mr. Beecher run so much

about the country lecturing on moral, literary, and political subjects? Why does he not stay at home and look more thoroughly after the interests of his church? Why does he edit a paper, write for magazines, keep a farm, and make novels, when there are sick to be visited, poor to be fed, and careless souls to be spoken to within the limits of his congregation? Is not the time he gives to these things so much time wasted, as far as the work of the ministry is concerned? Here is his own answer to these inquiries: "Well, where a man stands in the pulpit, and all the streams run away from the pulpit down to those things, the pulpit will be very shallow and very dry; but when a man opens these streams in the neighbouring hills as so many springs, and all the streams run down into the pulpit, he will have abundant supplies. There is a great deal of difference, whether you are working in the collaterals towards the pulpit or away from the pulpit.

"You can tell very quickly. If, when a man comes back from his garden, his lectures, his journeys, and his æsthetic studies, or from his scientific coteries and *séances*, he finds himself less interested in his proper work; if the Sabbath is getting to be rather a burdensome day to him, and it is irksome to be preaching, he must quit one or other of those things. The stream runs from the pulpit instead of into it. But if, when a man feels he is called to be an architect of men, an artist among men, in moulding them; when one feels that his life-power is consecrated to transforming the human soul toward the higher ideal of character for time and eternity, he looks around upon the great forces of the world and says to them, 'You are my servants;' to the clouds, 'Give me what you have of power;' to the hills, 'Bring me of your treasures;' to all that is beautiful, 'Come and put your garment upon me;' and to all that is enjoyable, 'Fill me with force, and give abundance to the fulness of my feeling'—if a man makes himself master of the secrets of nature that he may have power and strength to do his work—then he is not carrying on three or four kinds of business at the same time. He is carrying *one business*, and he collects from a hundred the materials and forces by which he does it."

As a natural consequence of Mr. Beecher's intense application to the sacred mission of preaching to dying and sinful men the eternal love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, Plymouth Church has been blessed with an unusually large number of powerful and deep-toned revivals. As we have already seen, Mr. Beecher is a strong believer in the genuineness and profitableness of religious awakenings. His teaching is that the Church needs them just as much as the world at large. The tendency of all institutions is to formalism, and formalism is death. The Church, it would seem, is more inclined to be indolent and inactive than any other organisation known to us. Again and again does it need to shake itself from the dust and be revived. Again and again is it necessary to infuse into its veins fresh and purer blood, that it may awake to a sense of its heavy responsibilities and be strengthened for the performance of its arduous duties. Revivals affect the Church just as April showers do the earth. They fertilize it. They call into action its latent forces. They intone and elevate the character of its spirituality. Moreover, revivals *in* the Church never stop in it. They very soon make themselves felt for good in the community outside. It is incontrovertible, that whenever a new moral impulse, a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit, and a nobler conception of the true significance of life are perceptible in the Church, the general tone of morality begins to improve in the world. And it is for the purification and uplifting of society that the church exists. It should be a representative of Christ upon the earth. Having known and experienced the saving and forgiving mercy of God itself, it is its imperative duty to offer the same knowledge and experience to those who are as yet in the darkness of ignorance and sin. The whole world would have been saved ere now had Christian people been wide-awake and ready to do their part. The Church has shamefully neglected the commission it so solemnly received from its Divine founder. It is by jerks only that our very best Christian organisations do their work, and those jerks, those seasons of activity, we dignify by calling them revivals. Plymouth Church stands much higher in this regard than our average churches. It has had a

revival almost every year since it began to exist. Indeed, one might almost say that Plymouth Church has been a model society. Its revivals have been of great power and long continuance—not sudden flashes illuminating the sky for a brief moment, but rays of pure light shining steadily and continuously into the hearts of men. Mr. Beecher believes that such revivals are always possible, and that they never fail to come when the requisite conditions meet. The means of grace are in our hands, and whenever we make the proper use of them, the Lord does not withhold the promised blessing. Mr. Beecher assures us that he has never been disappointed. Surely the wonderful history of his church is a lesson to all churches. Mighty have been the results of its earnest activities. Think of its enormous membership of three thousand people! Consider the thousands upon thousands that have gone out of it to be instruments of blessing throughout America and the world. Certainly such a church does not exist in vain. The Lord Jesus Christ has been magnified and glorified in all its ministrations.

Let us gaze a moment upon a most interesting and impressive scene that occurred some twenty years ago. It was on a Communion Sabbath in the month of June. The whole of the winter had been a time of extraordinary seriousness in the congregation. The immense audiences attending the Sabbath services had been all along giving evidence of profound earnestness and anxiety, and the successive occasions of public worship had been steadily growing more and more solemn and impressive. At the close of the evening sermons Mr. Beecher had been in the habit of inviting those unconverted persons in the congregation who desired to be prayed for, or who were anxious about their souls, to rise in their seats, and hundreds had availed themselves of the opportunity. At last the Communion Sabbath came, when nearly two hundred persons were to be received into the fellowship of the Church. It was a Sabbath never to be forgotten. The church was densely crowded in every part—aisles, passages, doorways, vestibule, and pulpit steps being occupied by eager spectators and listeners. The pulpit was beautifully decorated with fragrant flowers, and in it sat the venerable old patriarch, Dr. Lyman Beecher,

witnessing the scene with inexpressible gladness. Mr. Beecher could hardly contain himself. He smiled and cried alternately and often simultaneously. Had not the Lord blessed him beyond his most sanguine expectations? This was indeed the Lord's Day. After the usual invocation and singing, the long list of names of persons propounded for membership was read; and as soon as the ceremony of admission was over and a hymn was sung, Mr. Beecher delivered a very impressive and appropriate sermon, from which we make the following quotation: "This church is but eleven years old. It has been blessed with five seasons of peculiar religious growth. They have not been at the expense of intermediate seasons. Much has lately been said of revivals, and many have derided them as rare and occasional freshets of feeling in churches that ordinarily have none. That this is sometimes the fact is indisputable. But it need not be. A revival of religion is not an abnormal state. It is based upon natural laws. Like all other true states, it will be sound and beneficial, or imperfect and mischievous, according to the knowledge and skill with which men employ the great and stated agencies of truth.

"Five revivals have been experienced in eleven years in this church. Not only has this not been the case because the intermediate periods were unspiritual and declining, but there has been a continual growth in the spirituality of the church, and every revival has lifted the church higher. And when the special social religious element has subsided, it has not left the church cold, insensitive, and fruitless. For, if you except the communion season which follows the pastoral vacation, there has been scarcely a communion season in this church for years at which persons have not been received from the world. And there have been awakenings and conversions more or less frequent during every year, and during every month from year to year. Eleven years ago this month this church was formed with twenty-five members. To-day it stands up to praise God with the grateful hearts of 1377; and of this great company 673 have been received from the world, and upon good evidence of conversion. You must not uncharitably regard this as boasting. I have no time for that; I have a higher end in view.

"I wish it to be remembered that this church has had its whole life and development during a very critical period of American history. The gospel of Christ in every age has a new work to perform, a new growth to develop, new applications to the ever-changing phases of society to make. I need not tell you through what a memorable and eventful series of changes God has brought this nation. In preaching the gospel to you I have taken it for granted that my duty was to preach a living gospel to living men about living questions. I have not confined my attention to one subject. I have preached Christ as the fountain-head of all spiritual life, and the perfect exemplar. I have taught you that a deep, inward spiritual life, begun by God's Spirit and daily nourished by God's personal presence, is the foundation of all true Christian morals. I have taught you that love to God and to man is the characteristic element of all true Christian reformatory labour. And you will bear me witness that I have anxiously, and ten times—yes, a hundred times more than anything else—taught, laboured, and besought that you prepare yourselves for all external work by faith in Jesus Christ, by humility, by zeal tempered with discretion, by fervent sympathy with each other and with the whole brotherhood of mankind. And I have incessantly stimulated you to work in an atmosphere of love. Thus prepared, I have sought to inspire you with higher ideals of life in every one of its elements; with a higher notion of personal character; with a nobler sense of true manhood; with a purer and deeper way of personal living; with a richer and higher idea of the family state; with more noble habits of secular life. I have searched the family, the store, the shop, the office, the street, the ship, the farm, with the lighted candle of the gospel, and sought to develop in your mind the idea of a symmetrical Christian character, both contemplative and executive, both spiritual and philanthropic, both domestic and public. I have not forgotten things personal in things domestic, nor things secular in domestic truths, nor your public duties by any over-scrupulous ecclesiastical and church relationship. And in the fulfilment of this work you know very well that I

have neither neglected public questions nor yet intruded them so often as to give them disproportionate importance. I have called you to believe the deep and fundamental truth of Christ's atonement, on the human side of it—namely, that men are unspeakably precious, and valuable beyond all estimation before God. I have said that the meanest and lowest creature on the globe is of transcendent dignity, and has rights sacred as the throne of God. For what shall measure the worth of a creature for whose salvation Christ would die? One drop of Christ's blood is worth a globe, though it were one orbicular diamond. Souls are the jewels of God, not metals or stones. I have therefore taken hearty and earnest part in the struggles of our day for the great Christian doctrine of human liberty, and I have led no unwilling church into the conflict. In this matter (pardon me if I speak of myself) I have determined to have no interests, no reputation, and no position or influence, aside from these great truths. I have committed my soul to God's keeping, and have never asked nor cared what men might think, or say, or do. Too thankful to live in such a day and to work in such a field, I have only feared that my sight might grow dull, my heart grow feeble, and my hand become weak in this work so dear to the heart of Christ. As Christ has embraced the human soul in His own, so hath He taught me to call all men my brethren. And I have preached, lectured, written, and gone forth unhesitatingly and before the whole people, to bear witness to the great gospel of Christ in the one pre-eminent and transcendent application of it to the great pulsating living interest of this age and nation.

“Now, why have I said all this? For two reasons. First, because God has raised up this church as seal and testimony. It stands before the nation as a church consecrated to Christ, not only in a general way, but as a church that bears unfaltering witness to Christian reform. It stands before the world for temperance; for liberty, and against slavery; for humanity, and against all oppression in trade, in commerce, or in civil relations. And what has been God's testimony? Has this been a church split and divided by intestine quarrels? For eleven years your church

meetings have been open to the freest speech. And I call you to witness that there has never been a difficulty so large as a man's hand, nay, so large as a finger, in this society or church. We have gone through all discussions of the most perilous and exciting questions, and all men have had unrestrained liberty, and yet love has not been quenched. And we stand this day a loving brotherhood. You love me. I love you most heartily. And you love each other, and dwell in more than peace—yea, in great joy and gladness together. And it is a thing that has become noticeable and noticed, that there is in this church a spirit of general and undissembled love. This is God's blessing and God's witness to the righteousness of your cause.

"Moreover, while you have been faithful in some degree to Christ's work among the poor, see how He has set the seal to it by the repeated revivals sent among and upon you. To those who ignorantly denounce you for not preaching the gospel, we answer, within eleven years there have been five precious revivals of religion here, and many hundreds of conversions. Is this the history of a church without a gospel? I declare my solemn conviction that God has spiritually blessed you because it was the very gospel which we preached. Not a descant to the rich, not an essay to the refined, not a favouring of the prosperous, but a gospel of pity, love, and salvation—temporal and spiritual—to every tribe, race, and class of men. And I am willing to go before the impartial tribunal of coming times, and declare that by this fidelity to liberty, to good morals, to humanity, to the indispensable and integral elements of true spiritual religion, we have been prospered.

"The other reason that led me to this history was, that I might witness not alone to the reality, but to the beneficence of revivals of religion. They are not the mere alternative heats which follow worldly chills. Revivals are founded upon natural laws, just as are all other instrumental religious elements. They may be wisely dealt with. They may be ignorantly dealt with. But they do not exist because the Church, having been low, seeks to equilibrate itself by being unduly excited. They belong to the social and religious nature of men, gathered together in churches and

communities. As it respects this church, I bear witness that at each period this church has risen in consequence of such visitations to a higher level of Christian life, and kept it. The church by each season has risen to a higher conception of Christian life, to higher and purer views of Christ, to clearer conceptions of duty and usefulness, to greater desire for doing good, and expertness in carrying forth that desire. This church has been a Christian church, believing in the great cardinal doctrines held by evangelical Christians in common ; and because it was a Christian church it has been a temperance body, a church full of zeal for liberty, and incessantly laborious in all the great humanities of our age. And yet it has been expectant of revivals, and the grateful recipient of them. For as God gives a great seed-time and a great and general harvest to the year, and yet fills up the months also with incidental and perpetual blossoming and ripening of some sweet thing, so He gives to every true and intelligent church constant budding, constant blossoming. But, besides that, is grander profusion, greater harvests, in which the whole year opens its bosom and exhibits its vast richness. There may be a harvest of cockles and ches, but that does not argue against true wheat or corn. There may be an autumn for the crab-apple and the bitter sloe, but that does not take from the glory of the orchard nor from the exquisite flavour of its superabundant fruits."

In these wonderful seasons of religious awakening with which Plymouth Church has been so frequently visited, it would be wrong to suppose that the whole work was done by Mr. Beecher himself, or even by a few deacons. It is true that, humanly speaking, the pastor has always been the motive-power, the inspiring and leading force ; but it is also true that whenever he moves in a certain direction the whole church moves with him. He is not simply a teacher, but a living man seeking to bring to bear upon men around him the forces and principles of the spiritual life. His aim has been to preside over a *live* church, and so to preside over it as to make it an instrument of life and purity in the neighbourhood. He has strong convictions upon this point. In his opinion one of the most obvious reasons why our churches

do not, to a greater degree, fulfil their design is, "that ministers of the gospel have not a clear and proper idea of their functions. They know generally that they are to preach to the community, and that they are to edify the Church. But to be a preacher of sermons, a mere teacher in the pulpit, is not half a minister's work. He is set to drill a body of Christian men, so that they shall individually and collectively be a witnessing and ministering body. The voice of the whole Church, and not the voice of its ministry, is that which God appointed for the preaching of the gospel. If now a minister only preaches—and so preaches that his brethren wish to hear no one speak but himself—if, instead of inspiring life-power in them, which he then guides and trains them to fully express, he extinguishes their zeal, and fashions a public sentiment so rigid and exacting that no man in the Church dare utter his feelings, his thoughts, or his experiences, unless he can do it for edification (*i.e.*, do it in rhetorical fluency, with logical precision, and with a certain finish of literary good breeding), he defeats the very end of his ministry, and practically disowns the Congregational idea of a minister. Thus we see that many churches are nothing but listeners to a preacher. The society has an organic life and function; but the Church in such cases is but little better than a roll of names of persons baptized, initiated, permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, and expected to enjoy a good sermon. But to have a real life and function of their own, to have a social, loving atmosphere into which each one develops the blossoms of his religious life; to be a body competent to edify itself, to build itself up, and to stand by its own vital power as a multiform instruction in the community—such an idea is scarcely thought of. And hence it is that ministers come to be mere instructors. They do not educate. They do not train. They are not seeking to develop the gifts of the individual members of the Church—to drill them into a suitable exercise of those gifts. They seek to do good to their flocks as individual Christian men. But they do not group those individual Christian men into a community in such a way that they give utterance as a church, by their own voices, to the truth of Christ, or to their

experience of God's guidance and goodness. So that the Church is not an epitomé of God's multitudinous teachings; it is not the harmony of all the voices with which Christ speaks to the souls of His children. It is a mere class coming together to hear what a teacher shall say to them, and then going away and profiting as best they may. Now, a minister of the gospel should be a preacher of ideas, of the connection of ideas, which is theology; he should be a teacher of duties, *i.e.*, he should apply principles to the experiences of life—he should strengthen, comfort, inspire, and warn his people, but all these things should be but a part of a system of drill by which the whole Church shall become in like manner a teaching body. He is to see that his members are taught to pray—to pray with each other; to speak—to speak to edification. He is to develop the gifts of each in such a way as that the whole Church shall have the benefit. One man is fitly a thinker; another man is a man of observation and experience. One has zeal and native power; another has richness of heart and blessed simplicity. One has courage, another has the power of consolation; one is powerful in prayer, another in conversation. It is the duty of the minister to bring forth these gifts and make them the property of the whole Church. A church has a right to the gifts of every one of its members, and the minister is set to disclose and develop them. He is not to lean upon the strong, to avail himself of the services of those already developed. It is his office to take hold of every individual man, and to educate him so that he may bring forth the one, the two, or five, or ten talents which are committed to him, for the use and profit of all his brethren. A man of books, a man of ideas, a man of sermons, is not Christ's idea of a minister. 'Follow Me, and I will make you *fishers of men*.' A minister is a man of men. He is an inspirer and driller of men."

Mr. Beecher's own ministry has been a striking exemplification of the above remarks. He has been pre-eminently a "man of men." He has been a Christian minister, in the fullest, completest sense of the term. He has been "a preacher of ideas," "a teacher of duties," a minister of comfort and consolation, and especially "an inspirer and driller of men."

His church is therefore filled with men and women whose chief end in life is to spend and be spent in the noble service of heaven. He is surrounded by hundreds of people who are always ready to undertake any task, however difficult, if it has in view the welfare and education of their fellow-beings. The pastor is invariably at the head, leading on, but he is ever followed by a great host of willing assistants. Plymouth Church offers no asylum to idlers. It is a vast vineyard where every one is called upon to work with all his might. Like the mighty ocean, it is never quiet. Looking at it from without, one would think that the sort of life it enjoins is most laborious and fatiguing; but if the truth were known, it is the grandest and most thrillingly happy life conceivable. Those who go there for mere amusement will feel sadly disappointed; because the amusement to be had is alone for those who are engaged in genuine Christian work. Mr. Beecher has been accused again and again of sensationalism, and the charge is true if by sensationalism is meant zeal, earnestness, diligence in well-doing, intensity of purpose, utter hatred of stagnation and death; but if by sensationalism we are to understand some low clap-trap and cheap, bellowing rhapsody, the accusation is absolutely and totally false. Every minister of Jesus Christ should be a sensationalist in the higher sense of the word. The Apostle Paul was considered the most sensational man of his age. He was a man that turned the world upside down in his deep anxiety to reform it. Mr. Beecher, too, is sensational in that he aims to stir men up out of their sin and spiritual lethargy, in that he excites men into a sense of moral responsibility, and in that, under heaven's blessing, he succeeds to an extraordinary degree in educating the community and the world into a higher form of manhood. And his church is as culpable as himself in this regard. Following in the steps of its minister, it is one of the most sensational churches in Christendom. Blessed be sensationalism! Without it sinners will go down unmolested into the darkness of eternal night! Without it the redemption of the world can never be accomplished! Without it spiritual death will reign supreme on every hand! May God send us more men and more churches,

with power to create a stupendous sensation against all corruption and unrighteousness, and for holiness and truth and peace! It is utterly absurd to raise the cry of "sensationalism" against every great and earnest man; and the time is fast coming when every servant of God shall be so earnestly engaged in good work as to have no time to speak contemptuously of any honest man whatever, much less of those whom the Lord has endowed with superior ability and talent, and who are blessed with unusual prosperity.

The time has not come to write a full exhaustive history of Plymouth Church, and it is to be hoped that such a time will not arrive for many a century yet, but still it might be profitable to dwell upon some of its characteristic features as a Christian church. It has been so exceedingly fruitful in all spiritual graces, the type of Christian life which it has exemplified, and still exemplifies, is of so high and perfect a character, that we are naturally anxious to know more about it. Let us specify a few characteristics.

1. First in order and importance come the *Sabbath Services*. Externally Plymouth Church has no attractions whatever. Its architecture is severely modest and simple. No proud and lofty spire greets the heavens. No marble columns adorn the entrance. One would never take it for a church at all. And the street in which it stands is narrow and dingy. But once inside we are instantly convinced that it is a noble place of worship. Here again we find the greatest simplicity, but it is a simplicity that touches tender chords in our hearts, and prompts us to say, if not in audible words, yet in soul-whisperings, "Everything here is conducive to devoutness of spirit and true piety of soul." Indeed, "so far as the essentials of a church building are concerned, Plymouth Church is a model." The acoustic arrangements are perfect. The preacher's voice is heard in every part with equal distinctness. The seats are easy and comfortable. The windows are large and numerous, letting in an abundance of light, which we all so much need. The morning service commences at half-past ten o'clock. But even as early as nine o'clock strangers begin to gather around the building in hope of securing good seats, and also to avoid the crush later on. When the hour arrives, not an inch of space throughout the vast

church is unoccupied. Usually Mr. Beecher enters early, and, hat in hand, steps on the platform, looking as fresh and strong and happy as if he had been a well-to-do Western farmer all his life.

The first religious exercise of the morning is a voluntary on the mighty organ behind the pulpit ; and in less than two seconds we discover that it is not an empty unmeaning ceremony, but in very truth an act of worship. It is the going out of a pious noble soul towards its Lord and Maker, God. The organist, John Zundel, understands his work to perfection. His execution is fine and touching beyond comment, artistically correct not only, but spiritually living. The instrument itself under his manipulation seems to be on fire with tenderest emotion, and vocal with songs of praise and adoration. Mr. Zundel and the organ are one ; the organ is Mr. Zundel's tongue. Some time after his conversion he said to Mr. Beecher, "I can pray just as other people do now." "Why," said Mr. Beecher, "what do you mean?" He replied, "I can speak my prayers out to God." "Well, how did you always do?" "Oh," said he, "I always played them on the piano before." "And you would think," adds Mr. Beecher, "that he did it yet if you heard him in his inspired moments upon the organ. It has brought tears to my eyes a hundred times. I have gone in jaded and unhearted, and have been caught up by him and lifted so that I saw the flash of the gates. I have been comforted, I have been helped. And if I have preached to him and helped him—and I know I have—he has preached to me and helped me ; and he knows not, and never will know how much." The church that has such an organist may regard itself as being very highly favoured. It is often an infinite treat to go to Plymouth Church simply to hear the opening voluntary by John Zundel on that magnificent and glorious organ.

Next comes the invocation by Mr. Beecher, which at once strikes the key-note of the whole service. It is usually very brief and simple, but exceedingly touching and profound. Then a hymn is announced, in the singing of which the whole congregation heartily unite. There is a choir of about a hundred members stationed right in front of the organ, but so general and hearty is the singing

throughout the church, that a stranger would not suspect that there was a choir. The excellency of the music at Plymouth Church is proverbial, and Mr. Beecher himself is modest enough to tell us that it is the singing that brings so many people there. The powerful organ accompanies, and most beautifully do the sound of the organ and the voices of the people blend in a sublime symphony of praise to the Most High. "I am accustomed to think of a congregation with an organ," says Mr. Beecher, "as of a fleet of boats in the harbour or on the waters. The organ is the flood, and the people are the boats; and they are buoyed up and carried along upon its current as boats are borne upon the depths of the sea." But the organ does more than merely accompany the melody. In nearly all the churches of America interludes are played between the stanzas. "Now the interlude is an echo, or a prophecy, or both. If it be an echo, it attempts to render in pure musical sound the dominant thought of the stanza that went before. If it be a prophecy, it sees what is coming, and prepares the way for it, and brings the devotional congregation to the next stanza. And if it be in the hands of a Christian man, and a man of musical genius, it may help much. Otherwise it is a mere noisy gap between two verses, a sprawl sometimes, an awful racket of chords, a sort of running upstairs and tumbling down again." But John Zundel has a musical genius, and knows how to inspire and enrapture the congregation with his spiritual interludes, which at times sound like snatches of the songs of the glorified. No wonder then that Mr. Beecher should passionately exclaim, "I wish John Zundel had a hundred thousand children, and every one was another John Zundel."

The Scripture lesson follows, which Mr. Beecher reads in a clear resonant subduing voice, making the meaning plain to every listener, and rendering the sentiment with exquisite pathos and simple beauty. Then comes the prayer, which is perhaps the most unique and spiritual of all the devotional exercises. Mr. Beecher is truly great in prayer. He prays as we have never heard any other man pray. There is a depth of feeling, a beauty and delicacy of sentiment, an utter forgetfulness of self, a child-like trust and confidence, a

transparency of hope and assurance in his prayers such as we seldom find in the prayers of ordinary men. Our judgment differs from that of many, but it is our profound conviction that Mr. Beecher is one of the most godly men this world has ever seen. Godliness is not seriousness, nor gravity of mien, nor severity of temper, but a condition of soul-harmony with the Most High, a state of inward and outward agreement with the Divine mind. In this sense of the word, Mr. Beecher is eminently pious; and nowhere is his extraordinary piety so perceptible as in his public prayers. He makes no outward display, but in the simplest manner possible carries his own wants and those of his people, his country and the world, straight to the throne. No class or condition is forgotten; and when the Amen has been uttered, every one feels that his feelings and longings have been expressed and carried up to heaven.

Another hymn is sung as enthusiastically as before, after which all the necessary intimations are made, and they are often a great host. Mr. Beecher sometimes talks half-an-hour before the sermon, commenting in a humorous and instructive style upon the different subjects mentioned or suggested in the various notices. The object in view, no doubt, is to point out the relationship that ought to exist between the secular and the religious, to look at political, educational, social, and purely moral questions from the standpoint of Christianity. Believing that religion is designed to enter into the whole of a man's life, and give to it a new colour and significance, conscious that ministers as a rule confine themselves too much to abstract doctrines and philosophical disquisitions, and painfully aware of the tendency to inconsistency and hypocrisy which characterises too many professing Christians, Mr. Beecher avails himself of every opportunity to apply the glorious principles of religion to the exigencies of every-day life. As a specimen of the remarks he usually makes when giving out notices, take the following, which was made many years ago, in connection with a certain concert: "This concert, I perceive by the notice, is to be 'partly sacred and partly instrumental;' that is to say, one part is to be just as sacred as the other; for all good music is sacred, if it is heard sacredly, and all poor music is execrably unsacred." How

true and beautiful an observation, and how general in its application. Life is not what it ought to be unless all its parts are equally sacred. The sermon comes next, which ordinarily lasts an hour, and, occasionally, an hour and a half. He never preaches short sermons, as far at least as minutes and seconds are concerned ; and yet no one ever dreamt that he delivers long ones. So superior is his ability, so thrilling is his eloquence, so intense and transparent are his thoughts, that whenever he begins to speak he instantly annihilates time for all his hearers. Good, profitable, and inspiring sermons are never long, no matter how many minutes and seconds it takes to deliver them ; but a poor, lifeless, thoughtless discourse is a quarter of an hour too long though it take only fifteen minutes. How absurd for ministers to measure their orations by so many sheets of our modern sermon-paper ! Mr. Beecher heeds not the time, but concentrates his attention upon the subject he may have in hand and upon the circumstances of his hearers. His only concern is to be useful. He is not an orator making a display of his eloquence, but a preacher standing in the room of God, and seeking to develop noble impulses and sublime aspirations and godlike sympathies in every one before him. It is for the production of these divine qualities that he is always labouring. In order to succeed he employs all lawful means within his reach. If art can help him, he appropriates it. If science can render any assistance he does not hesitate to utilise it. He brings everything under tribute to his sacred calling. What is the central element of his ministry ? LOVE. He loves God, and he loves men as the children of God ; and in preaching he brings the whole force of his glowing heart to bear upon the hearts and consciences of those who listen to him.

"I have been to hear Henry Ward Beecher for the first time," writes one, "and I never shall forget the sermon. The rain was pouring in torrents, but his church was crowded. His text was, 'For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.' He commenced with the statement that every man has a conscience, and proceeded to expound the truth, showing that each one, with this innate idea of right

and wrong, was constantly striving to justify himself according to his standard of right—‘going about to establish his own righteousness.’ He then presented a number of ways resorted to in this eagerness to justify one’s self, the devices to keep on good terms with conscience, dispersing ‘refuges of lies’ without mercy, and identifying and parcelling characters with a nicety and fidelity which left those who were not actually located in a very small minority. He appealed directly to self-consciousness and the moral sense; and it was useless to evade. The sermon was one hour and a quarter long, yet weariness never occurred to me, and I lost not a word. It was extempore, and yet evidently the result of severe study. The heads, which were many, were written out, and showed by their close and accurate wording the analysis they had undergone. Therefore when by his logic he had convinced the understanding, by his lucid presentation of truth bowed the reason and roused the conscience, then the feelings of all were in his power, and he made the nerves to thrill and the tears to start as I never experienced in a religious assembly. A lady behind me had shown some emotion, but when in portraying the relation between Christ and the sinner, he said, ‘Christ stands like a father to his prodigal son, and he says, “My son, my son, let the past be *sunk* between us, and we will be to each other as in days gone by; you shall love me and I will love you, and we will live together as we used to do,”’ her feelings broke over control, and she wept aloud. A young Englishman sat by me who had been prevailed upon to attend church instead of a social circle. His lip quivered in effort to restrain emotion; but it would not do; the tears started from his eyes—he was overcome. And it seems to me that a person who had never seen a Bible could, from that sermon, have apprehended the essential truths of Christianity.” There is no dulness, it is evident, in Plymouth Church. It would be rather difficult to fall asleep within its walls, especially while the sermon is being delivered. At first, for about half-an-hour perhaps, the preacher is quiet, speaking in a conversational tone of voice, profoundly interesting and instructive, but not all-conquering and sweeping all before him. He is only feeling his

way, removing obstacles of every description, gathering strength every step, unlocking every door, passing through every room on his way to the centre of the soul—the heart and the conscience. At last he is ready to make an attack upon the citadel itself. He stands on the hillside and discharges volley after volley of sacred fire till the foundations of the city tremble, and he takes no rest till the enemies make a complete, unconditional surrender.

To adopt the language of an eye-witness: "By this time the preacher had passed from the quiet stream of discourse into the rapids. He moved quickly about the platform; his gestures became more violent—at last he raised both clenched hands above his head, and seemed to rise to twice his height as he poured out a volume of sound which electrified us. He then stopped abruptly, went back to his Bible, and began again calmly—presently to hurry on to new rapids, and to thunder over a fall to another peaceful beginning." A gentleman went to hear him not long ago, who, though highly intelligent and well read, was not a Christian, but somewhat addicted to intemperance and profanity. His object in going was simply to satisfy his curiosity. He was deeply impressed during the devotional exercises, the solemn earnestness of the preacher being so manifest; but when the sermon began to fall upon his ears he was instantly charmed and captivated, and long before the Amen was uttered he was heard by those sitting next to him sighing out, "Well, well, if I had preaching like that all the time, I too would be a Christian." Those who are familiar with Mr. Beecher's published sermons will not be surprised at such wonderful scenes as we have just depicted. Such sermons delivered by such an accomplished orator, who is also pre-eminently a man of God, cannot fail to produce mighty and lasting effects. There is in them an inspiration, an enthusiasm that goes straight to the heart, and that helps to transform the character and the life. The preacher himself is in them, and the preacher's God. Talk of the influence of the pulpit declining! Why, the pulpit was never so powerful and influential as it is to-day—when suitably filled.

The sermon over, a brief but earnest prayer is offered,

which is followed by another hymn and the benediction. Then the vast assembly scatters amid showers of melody from the organ. Another service of the same character is held in the evening again. It is not probable that the order has been varied in the least during the last thirty years. And yet the interest has never flagged. The singing is always cheerful and lively, the prayers are invariably profound and spiritual, and the sermons are ever searching, inspiring, and fresh. Mr. Beecher's fertility and freshness astonish all. "I asked," says a casual attendant, "a gentleman who sat behind me whether he was a regular attendant, and if so, whether he remarked any difference in the quality of the sermons, or any repetition. He said, 'I have sat here five years, and I never heard any man repeat himself so little. I have heard other celebrated preachers, and I have heard no one equal to him. As for the sermon to-day it was neither better nor worse than his discourses in general. It was an average sermon.'"

2. Another characteristic feature of Plymouth Church is its *Friday Evening Prayer-Meeting*. In the great majority of modern churches the week-night prayer-meeting is a failure, so far at least as the numbers attending it are concerned. A flourishing prayer-meeting is a great rarity. It is the traditional complaint of ministers that they cannot get their people to come out to a mid-week service. Some churches have no such service at all; and if we go to some of the largest churches in Christendom we shall find that every institution prospers better than this. Not long ago we attended a week-night service in a church of three hundred members, and the whole congregation that evening consisted of the minister himself, two elders, and three old ladies. The minister entertained us with a theological harangue of great profundity, and of great length withal, one of the elders prayed for half-an-hour, a hymn was sung, and the company parted in blissful harmony, looking heavenward. The whole service was of so melancholy and gloomy a character, the atmosphere resting upon it was so heavy and oppressive, and the surroundings were so uninviting, that it was no wonder the people would not venture out. In fact, the impression is abroad that the prayer-meeting is

the dullest and most insipid of all meetings. There is nothing in it to attract. Children get no enjoyment in it, and therefore are never present. Adults find no edification in it, and they stay at home. Those who do attend do it more from a sense of duty than from any pleasure or benefit that they derive. But the Plymouth Church prayer-meeting is always crowded, and is looked upon as the most enjoyable of meetings. All the people are actually in love with it, and it would involve the greatest task possible to keep them away from it. Children frequent it, and are edified. Fathers and mothers attend it, and are benefited. Young men and young maidens flock to it, and are cheered, and warned, and directed. Strangers come to it, and feel as if they were at home. Young and old, rich and poor, high and low, are thus eager to be present at the weekly prayer-meeting, which is an unmistakable evidence that it is by no means an ordinary meeting; and the question naturally presents itself, What is it that makes the Plymouth Church prayer-meeting an exception to all other prayer-meetings in Christendom? But rather than enter upon a formal discussion of this point we will give a specimen of the meeting itself.

It is held in a lecture-hall adjoining the church, a room that will hold about a thousand persons. The service commences at half-past seven o'clock. The time is now up, and the hall is filled to the very doors. Mr. Beecher is seated in a chair on a small platform, with a low little desk in front of him to hold the Bible and the hymn-book. On his right is his venerable grey-headed brother, the Rev. Dr. Edward Beecher. Without rising, Mr. Beecher announces a hymn. As a rule, he does not read the hymn before singing, nor does he introduce it by any preface, such as "Let us begin by singing," or, "Let us sing to the praise of God," or, "Let us open this divine service by praising God," or, "Let us unite in the worship of God by singing hymn so-and-so." He simply indicates the number thus, "385," or "450," taking for granted that everybody knows they are going to sing, and that it is a hymn they are going to sing. In the middle of the room is a piano, which accompanies the melody. Mr. Beecher prefers a piano in a lecture-room, because it is

more exhilarating, and marks the time better. The singing is quite as good as on the Sabbath. Next he calls on some brother to lead in prayer. Then another hymn. As soon as the singing is over Mr. Beecher, without rising from his chair, begins to speak thus :—

“No one, I think, can look through the Book of Psalms without being struck with the amount which it contains of that particular experience which we call the *spirit of praise*. A great many have a vague impression that praise is closely allied to flattery; that it is, at any rate, the recitation into one's ears of all his good qualities. Nothing, it seems to me, could be more odious. And, as we grow finer and morally higher by imbibing the spirit of the Gospel of Christ, it would become proportionately abhorrent if praise meant the recitation before God even of what we conceive to be the divine excellence, in any such sense as that of flattering Him, to conciliate Him, and to render Him more facile to our petitions. That is a low and ungenerous and gross way of viewing praise.

“If men are surprised by a great pleasure, you will see the difference between one and another in this, that a stolid or selfish man will absorb his pleasure, while a generous nature, like a bell, will ring out his. It is the instinct of every true and large nature to distribute its own sensations of enjoyment, to radiate its own emotions of pleasure. You cannot meet a noble man and spend a few moments with him without burning to tell your friends something about him. Occupation, or the time that has elapsed since you met him, may have quenched the impulse when you meet them : but I think the first desire of every generous person on seeing a thing which excites pleasure in him, is to excite pleasure in some one else. It is this tendency of the mind to reflect itself upon others that is the key-note and fundamental element of the spirit of praise.

“Where the soul stands before God, and becomes vividly conscious of any divine excellence, of anything that is beautiful, of anything that is grand, it ought, if true to itself, to have an impulse to express it; but it is the result of delight and pleasure produced by the action of the Divine Being upon the mind.

“Praise is not, then, the recitation of all the good qualities that you can think of in God. It is the utterance of the joy and gladness which the divine excellence tends to excite in you. That is the genuine language of praise.

“I used, as a child, to hear heaven familiarly called the *day of everlasting rest*, the *Sabbath of the soul*; and I thought it was owing to my depravity that I had no relish for it. I had an idea that heaven was a place where everybody could sing, and was singing; but the subject-matter of what they sang I had no conception of. I was brought up in the back country, where singing was a duty, performed as best it might be by those who engaged in it, and my suggestions and imaginations concerning it were not very radiant. I had a notion that the saints stood around the throne and sang; and my imagination had been helped by seeing long rows of angels, like wax-candles, represented in pictures. I had an idea that angels stood about the throne very white and very pure, and recited before God what they thought of Him. I did not like it, and I thought I was a miserable wretch because I did not. I thought I was depraved, and that if I were only a Christian I *should* like it. But as I grew older, it struck me that my child instinct was correct, that I was under a misapprehension, and that they who praised God in heaven were represented as doing it musically, because high feeling tends to utter itself through the medium of music. It struck me that praising God was not so much reciting and rehearsing God’s qualities as the report of a man’s own inward joy, as excited by the aspect, the glory, the office of God.

“Now, it seems to me that, according to this conception of praise, Christians, for the most part, are not in a state to praise God. And it is very remarkable to see how men will open their prayers. A man will begin to pray by saying, ‘We praise Thee, O Lord,’ and in a dull, measured, literal, methodical manner, will say that he is doing that which nobody ever does except in an ecstatic state—except in language which implies intense and rapturous excitement. You shall hear persons, because they think it is their duty to praise God, utter the items of praise, one by one, as though they were reading off a merchant’s bill of parcels;

saying, for instance, 'We praise Thee for creation, and we praise Thee for providence, and we praise Thee for grace,' with suitable modifications under each head. Far be it from me to say that no person should utter praise unless he has arrived at the highest state of religious feeling—for there are different degrees of this feeling which are compatible with a proper utterance of praise; but I wish to dissuade you, when such a feeling in any degree is excited in you, from supposing it to be your duty, and from acting as though it were a kind of duty, to recite God's qualities before Him, instead of being satisfied with and profiting by the effect on your mind of a near contemplation of those qualities.

"To resume the original thought introduced by these remarks, I find in reading the Bible that it was the habit of the Old Testament saints and of the New Testament saints—that it was the habit of religious men both before and after Christ—to indulge in much praise of God. They had such ready access to Him, they had such sweet and joyous views of Him, He was so near and precious to them, that there was excited in them a continuous desire to praise Him. And this feeling sometimes amounted to a desire to caress. We are informed that John laid his head on the Saviour's bosom; and if he did it once, you may be sure that he did it many times. Many instances show that Christ's familiarity with His disciples extended to caressing. And we have an intimation that there is such a thing as the soul's caress of God; that a man may have such a sense of God's presence that his heart shall touch, as it were, the divine heart. And ascriptions of praise to God under such circumstances may be called a *caress of words*.

"I hardly know how there could be a near life with Christ without praise or the spirit of praise. I can scarcely conceive it possible that the soul of a man should be in intimate relations with the divine soul without having a desire to praise God excited in him. How is it with us? How many dull, drudging days do we have! How many days unilluminated by one single wish to utter thanks or gladness! How many selfish days of duty! How many days of fear! How many days of secret uneasiness! How few

days do we find in which we experience a spirit of praise, except those rare days of health in nerve and pleasure in external condition! Now and then, with many persons, there is a salient day, a kind of pinnacle, on which they are joyful, and feel like praising God. But a true Christian experience would find, during some part of every day, the soul in a condition to love and praise God. To be in a praising state one must be in a most unselfish condition of mind; he must live relatively humble as before God; he must be sensitive to his obligations to God; he must have a faith that shall enable him to see God in the events which are transpiring about him. The desire to praise God presupposes a large experience. For one to have this desire is almost the same as to be a rich and ripe Christian.

"I anticipate the questions that you will ask. You will say, 'How shall a man praise God who seems to himself to be in continuous trouble?' Look at the history of David, and see how you will do it. I think some of the most wondrous of his Psalms are those that begin in supplication. He says, for instance, 'All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me; all mine enemies are upon me; dost Thou not care for me?' and then, having exhausted the language of supplication, he breaks out into triumph, and says, 'I will praise Thee.' It seems as though there rose up over the horizon to him the bright star of Christ, and as though the light of it kindled in his soul gladness and peace that he could not refrain from giving expression to. You will find that in some of the Psalms the soul begins in a minor key, and by-and-by rises to the major key, and then flies away; and sings as it flies.

"Now if a man is in trouble, let him go to God in his trouble, till he gets a sense of the divine loving, pitying, sympathetic nature, and see if there does not spring up in him a spirit of praise. And whenever you feel an impulse to praise, give it wings. Do not lose a chance to praise. It is precious to the soul.

"'How,' it is asked, 'shall a man who is not mobile, who is not sympathetic, who is naturally calm, learn to praise?' Every man must do it according to his nature, of course. Some can learn to praise only in a low degree,

others can learn to do it in a high degree; but according to his measure, every person may learn the spirit of praise.

“So far as producing this spirit is concerned, I think nothing is so well calculated to do it as music. Singing is a means of grace. And those persons who are gifted with song, or those persons who can express their thoughts in the language of hymns, hardly need to ask how they shall learn to praise. Music and sacred hymns naturally go with Christian experience. They were born out of it, and will live with it to the end of time, I suppose. And if Christians conferred with each other more with reference to God’s goodness to them, and helped each other more to sing and to praise, their communion in these matters would go far toward forming the habit of praise in them.

“Another question is, ‘How are we to be redeemed from the stigma which too often rests upon Christian experience, that it is melancholy and morbid?’ This would be to a great extent removed if we learned more to make the natural language of Christian life the language of praise, of exhilaration, of song, of gladness. These things are attractive to children even. They are attractive to all persons. A radiant piety, a loving piety, a hopeful piety, and above all, a singing and praising piety, wins every class of men, and honours the name of Christ in the world.

“I cannot, therefore, emphasise too much the duty of praise in the family and in the sanctuary. I was struck in college with Dr. Humphrey’s habit of mind. He used to go through a whole prayer of a Sabbath morning in which every single sentence from beginning to end was, ‘We thank Thee, O God.’ I have heard him pray for nearly fifteen minutes, during which time he had not uttered one single sentence which had not that initial form. It was a prayer of thanksgiving from beginning to end. It stamped itself upon my young and sensitive mind.

“Now if parents, as sometimes they do, and properly, spend a prayer in confession of sin, that produces a profound impression on the child; but if it is confession to-day and to-morrow, and the next day and the next; if in their prayers they continually wade knee-deep and neck-deep in a mere sense of sin, what impression is produced on the

child and on the household? If, on the other hand, while this state of soul is recognised with profound sensibility, there is the sense of victory constantly expressed in the utterances of parents in the presence of the household; if they bear testimony to the goodness of God to them in the family and out of it, in their individual and social history, in dangers, in temptations, in joys and sorrows, in hopes and fears, and they find perpetual argument for thanksgiving—it lends a motive for piety in the young, which is good.

“Is it proper to go to God with secular troubles, and make them subject-matter of prayer? Would you, for instance, encourage men who are in debt to pray that God would help them to means with which to discharge their indebtedness?”

“I would. Any trouble that a man would go to his earthly father about, he may go to his God about. People say, ‘Do you believe that, contrary to all the great laws of nature and political economy, God will provide a sum of money for a man in answer to his prayer? Do you believe that God contravenes natural laws to assist a man in paying his debts?’ I do not. But when a man has used his means to the uttermost, and trusts in God, then God uses His means to control natural laws for that man’s benefit. I know that if I succeed I must succeed, not by having my father’s name, but by putting forth my own exertions. I know that I must make my own way in life, and I undertake to do it. But if I come to a point where I am shut up, held back, so that I cannot go forward, and I do not know what to do, I may go to my father for help. It is not for the sake of throwing off burdens, it is not with the expectation that he will contravene natural laws that I go to him. I go to him because I have used up my stock of knowledge of natural laws; and I say to him, ‘You are older and larger than I am; cannot you use your knowledge of those laws so as to help me?’ And he says, ‘Yes, I can.’ And he does. And nobody thinks there is anything strange in it. Everybody understands that a father can use his knowledge of natural laws for his child without violating these laws. But when you speak of God’s helping men in their secular affairs, people are aghast, and say, ‘Do you suppose God is going to

stop the laws of nature for the sake of enabling men to keep their bank account running?' I understand that God helps men, not by stopping natural laws, but by using them better for us than we can use them for ourselves. And if there is anything justified, it is prayer for help in secular matters by those that love God. And the oftener you go to God for help, the more welcome you are. When a man comes to you for counsel concerning things that are important as affecting his welfare, it not only does not impoverish you to give him the benefit of your knowledge and wisdom, but you are gratified at his consulting you, and you take pleasure in lending yourself to him to that extent. I cannot conceive of a man who, having a store of discreet knowledge, should be unwilling to use it for the succour of his fellow-men. If ducats were as plenty with me as thoughts, I should be most happy to lend to everybody.

"Now when we go to God, we ask Him to do things that please Him. It is more blessed for Him to give to you and to help you than not to do it. And when a man is in trouble, and goes to God, and says, 'I have done all I can; I do not know what to do more; I am willing to suffer or to be relieved; Thy will be done,'—I believe that then God hears and answers prayer, even though the trouble be of a secular nature. And I do not believe that in doing it He violates natural laws. I believe, on the contrary, that He controls natural laws, and makes them perform errands of mercy. I should feel almost as though I were an orphan if that doctrine were taken out of the world.

"I recollect hearing my father say that once when he came home from a journey on a Saturday night in the dead of winter, mother met him at the door, and said, 'We have just enough fuel for this evening, but none for to-morrow.' Anybody that ever lived on Lichfield Hill in winter knows that a Sunday there and then would not suggest summer. Father used to be run very close for money in those days, and in this instance he had none, and did not know where to get any. And, in telling of it, he said, 'I felt like a child, and I inwardly prayed God to help me.' And he said he had hardly finished praying before an old farmer who had never been particularly friendly, and who did not come to church

very often, drove up to the door with a load of wood, which he said he 'took it into his head he would like to give to the parson.'

"Do you ask me if that was an answer to prayer? Well, although I would not attempt a philosophical explanation of it, it is so pleasant to think it was an answer to prayer, and the circumstances point so strongly in that direction, that I prefer to think it was. I do not believe it will do anybody any hurt to believe that God loves us, that His ear is ever open to our cry, and that, while we use all lawful and known means in our own behalf, He stands ready to succour us in our hour of trouble. I would not for anything have my mouth stopped so that I could not go to Him in my extremity, and say, 'I am poor and wretched; Oh, help! help!'

"Do you not think that the whole tendency of our people is toward an unseemly, if not a vulgar, familiarity with the Divine Being?"

"There is undoubtedly danger of using a familiarity which indicates a want of realisation of God's presence. Nevertheless, there is a familiarity of love as well as of irreverence. 'Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' You cannot very well lay down rules about this matter. All prayers, whether they are grave or light, whether they are reverential or familiar, if they bear evidence that the man who utters them has not a true filial feeling toward God, are perfunctory not only, but shocking; while all prayers that are the genuine expression of filial feeling toward God, no matter how familiar they may be, are proper, and do not repel.

"As to the spirit in which we approach God, sometimes it is the spirit of conscience; sometimes it is the spirit of veneration; sometimes it is the familiarity of love; sometimes it is the augustness of fear; sometimes it is a sense of grandeur; sometimes it is a desire for help; sometimes it is a feeling of nearness and friendship. The language of prayer and the mode of approaching God vary through many degrees.

"Is it right for us to go to God with that spirit which

Jacob exhibited when he wrestled with the angel, and said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me"?"

"That is not the language of every day. It was the crisis of the patriarch's life, and he was kindled to an ecstasy of feeling. When the mind is roused up as his was, it chooses its own language. There are crises in every man's life, of distress and of ecstatic desire, in which the soul mounts up and employs language that could not ordinarily be employed. And when the feeling justifies it, there is nothing that the soul may not use. When the soul is in battle, it seizes anything for a shaft, and lets it fly. And when a man is in anguish and agony, and is impleading God, he does not stand on grammar or words. But when a man in an ordinary key of feeling brings down this language of paroxysmal moments and employs it, it is wrong, of course."

The address is followed sometimes by a more general discussion of the subject under consideration, sometimes by voluntary prayers, sometimes by the singing of several hymns, interspersed with exhortations or statements of belief or experience by gifted brethren, and sometimes only by a single hymn announced by Mr. Beecher himself, and the benediction; but the meeting is never prolonged over an hour. Mr. Beecher is very particular to begin at the moment appointed, and to end within the hour. It is only once in ten times that he suffers it to go over that period, and then only because of something very special or unusual. He never lets a meeting drag. In the conduct of the service his chief concern is to combine the instructive and the interesting, believing that nothing can be very instructive unless it is also interesting. He seeks to develop the social element, and to avoid all stiffness and uniformity. He introduces the most wholesome and agreeable variety. One week prayer predominates, while speaking is thrown into the background. The next week, perhaps, praise takes the lead, most of the time being filled up with singing, and not with either prayer or conference. Then the next week conference predominates, prayer and praise taking the minor part. If the people come in and seem to have no spirit or fire, he usually opens with the first prayer himself,

especially when his heart is full, which brings them into kindling sympathy with him, and through him with God. At other times if he sees signs of interest and feeling, he allows them to lead off, and occasionally even to introduce the topic, which he takes up and unfolds before them, helping them both to understand it and become more deeply and practically interested in it. No two meetings are exactly alike, and consequently every meeting is as fresh and edifying as if it were the first meeting ever held. If anybody has a word to utter he is encouraged to say it, not simply by the leader, but by the very atmosphere of the meeting. Everybody feels at home, just as free and happy as if he were in the bosom of his own family on the hearth-stone. How easy it must be in such a condition of things to make truth personal; that is, to bring it home to men as a thing that concerns them individually! In a lecture to candidates for the ministry, Mr. Beecher refers to this point in the following words:—"One of the troubles which every minister of any standing and experience has found, has been to fashion sermons so that a great truth could be made to branch till it reached out and touched all the individual cases. He has had the feeling come over him, 'Well, they are simply infinite.' And a sermon may begin like the handle of a splint broom, but it will end with as many different points as there are in the end of the broom. So you feel that you cannot do it. True, you cannot so well do it in the pulpit. But if you have a living church—and it depends upon yourself whether you have or not—if you make your prayer-meetings so social, so genial, so elastic, so open-mouthed and open-hearted, that you can ask anybody questions and they are not ashamed to talk, and talk goes backward and forward among them—and almost every man see things a little differently from his neighbour, and one and another asks, 'What shall I do in such and such a case?'—you will find that a truth which you state generically instantly becomes specific; that it is multitudinous. I am continually struck with this, that when I introduce a topic in prayer-meeting, and open it as it runs in my mind, I hardly get through presenting it—I am hopeful, I look at things in the light of courage and hope—before a brother on

my left hand, who always has a kind of melancholy caution, brings me up with, 'Don't you think, Brother Beecher, that if persons were to follow that out in such and such relations, it would be liable to such and such perversions?' 'Oh yes, I never thought to stop up that hole;' so then I give it a little plaster in that direction. And so it goes all around, and men look at the subject from some experience of their own, from some habitude of their own minds, from some new different philosophy of their own. They put questions which result in the end in bringing this truth home from its generic state to a personal truth, to black and white, to each particular person. He gets it as he wants it."

Is it at all strange, then, that such a prayer-meeting is always crowded? Is it not a fact that people will invariably flock to where they can get good spiritual food well cooked? It would be the greatest wonder conceivable if a meeting of that kind should be poorly attended. It is only when the services are dull and dry and heavy that the people stay at home. Moreover, a good prayer-meeting attracts outsiders. The freshness, the liveliness, and the reality of it will bring men to it, and make them feel, when they do come, that it is just the right place for them. And the meeting will grow till there will be no room big enough to contain it. Mr. Beecher gives us a very amusing picture of a man being led step by step into a *real* prayer-meeting, and of the impression made upon his mind and heart. He says: "He hears singing in there, and rousing good singing too. He rather likes hymns, and he slips inside of the door and sits down. A man gets up, after the meeting has advanced, and says, 'Brethren, our pastor has been opening up the subject of Sincerity, and it came pretty near to me. I try to be sincere, but I must confess that in conducting my business I slide sometimes before I think. Now, yesterday, I went into a transaction something like this'—and he gives an account of an affair in which he had been a little too quick for the other man, and rather got the best end of the bargain—and he says, 'Well, I didn't feel particularly happy all the way back to the store. My conscience rather accused me, and I made up my mind that I would go and rectify that thing.' The man who slipped in is the very man with whom he had that dealing,

and who had said of him, 'Damn him! he is a member of the church.' That is what he said immediately after the business transaction, but what does he say now? 'Bless his heart! The old fellow has some feeling, hasn't he?' Now, any man that can change a 'damn' into a 'bless' is doing a good work. But here is a man who judges men by no charitable standard, who sees things as they are in business. He comes in and sees a man who had all his life had faults. He finds out that that man knows them, and is trying to get over them. He knows that that man tried sharp practice over him, and sees that he feels sorry for it. He is speaking about it, though in an impersonal way. 'Really,' says the new-comer, 'I guess there is some sincerity, after all, in religion.' When he goes home, he says to his wife, 'Where do you suppose I have been?' 'Well, I don't know; I suppose around to Fox's, to see Humpty Dumpty.' 'No, guess again. Where do you suppose I have been?' 'Well, I don't know; some theatre.' 'No, guess once more.' 'I give it up.' 'I have been around to the prayer-meeting.' That is a surprise to her. Says he, 'I tell you what; it was really a good meeting. I positively enjoyed it.' He has to tell it all. When the time for the next meeting comes round, he says, 'Put on your shawl, my dear, and let us go around to the prayer-meeting and see what we will get.' They go around, and find that it is fresh, and means business. He may not believe all he hears there, but, after all, there are many truths. Men come together, and take hold of the very roots of subjects and discuss them. They try to be honest. That man cannot help himself. He is already convicted. He has not a Mount Sinai conviction, perhaps, but he may have a little haycock conviction. He has got a consciousness of faults. He has got the preliminary tentative states that, under ordinary, suitable, fair instruction, will develop in him. Manly sympathy, really humane feeling toward him, will bring that man right along. Ask him, 'Don't you think you have faults? Don't you commit sins? Are you not guilty of derelictions both to God and man? Isn't it time for you to begin to think about this thing?'"

Mr. Beecher prepares for the prayer-meeting just as carefully and laboriously as for the pulpit. In the lecture from

which we have quoted already we find this wholesome advice to young ministers:—"If you prepare your sermon laboriously, if you make Sunday your idol, and spend all your available force in that direction, and count your little social meetings during the week as 'only prayer-meetings—nothing to do to-day but my prayer-meeting'—if you put that kind of emphasis on it, you certainly will not make much out of it. Although training for the pulpit is one thing and training for the prayer-meeting is another, I think that the man who is to excel in prayer-meetings must train more for them, though differently, than for the pulpit. I should be very sorry to be forced into the conduct of a prayer-meeting without having anticipated it during the day; not so much that I might think what I was going to say, but, as it were, to *beat up* my nature, to get into a higher mood, to rise into a thought more of the Infinite; to get some such relation to men as I think God has, of sympathy, pity, tenderness, and sweetness; to get my heart all right, so that everything in me should work sympathetically toward certain devotional ends. Get yourself trained."

3. Plymouth Church's greatest activity is exhibited in connection with its *Bible Classes and Mission Schools*. These institutions are sources of untold benefit to the city of Brooklyn; and it is in them that the lay element of the church comes into greatest prominence, for they are conducted exclusively by laymen. While at Lawrenceburg Mr. Beecher was the superintendent of the Sunday school, and also taught a class at the same time. Even then he did not believe that a minister should undertake to fill all possible offices himself, ignoring the talents of his people; but in his case there was no one but himself who could do the work. He had only one man at command, and he was always wishing he did not have him. After he went to Indianapolis, however, he was surrounded by men willing and able to help him, and to them he assigned the work of teaching in the Sabbath school. But even there he was accustomed to deliver lectures on the Bible, which answered the same purpose as a Bible class; and he informs us that he derived more personal benefit in many respects from that work than from any other. He says: "I took up the Scriptures

seriatim. The whole of the New Testament I went through by lectures. I think I have now, somewhere on my shelves at home, the lectures I prepared thirty years ago, in which I went over pretty much the whole of the New Testament, chapter by chapter, verse by verse. I asked for questions, sometimes provoked questions, but mainly I expounded the Scriptures myself." When he came to Brooklyn, he fully intended to develop good Bible classes. Owing to the multitude of his public engagements, and the enormous amount of preaching required of him, he has not been able to conduct a Bible class himself; but he has had so many helpers raised up around him that the work has been always carried on with great efficiency and success. There are three Sunday schools belonging to the church—the Home School, the Bethel, and the Plymouth Mission. In the Home School there are nearly a thousand children taught by devoted men and women, and there is also a Bible class of two hundred young men over fifteen years of age. In the Bethel there are also about a thousand scholars, and in the Bible class connected with it about two hundred married men. In connection with this school there is, in addition, a female Bible class of about one hundred and fifty married women. In the Plymouth Mission there are five hundred scholars, and about one hundred in the Bible classes. These schools and Bible classes are exerting a very beneficial influence upon the community, and are great accessories of the church. Here is a fact worth noting. Plymouth Church receives from two hundred and fifty to three hundred new members every year, and it may be said that fully four-fifths of them come through the Sunday schools and the Bible classes. Mr. Beecher is exceedingly fond of relating facts and incidents in connection with these grand institutions. Speaking of the Bible class for married men, he says: "This class is quite a phenomenon. The gentleman who teaches it was a soldier, who lost his arm in the service. He is singularly well fitted for this work. He had a large number of poor, plain, but excellent men; but they were not all such. He has gathered up from the street the degraded, the literally lost. At first his class was small—nine or ten; but he worked with them faithfully, and set

them to gathering up their abandoned companions. Among those brought in were drunkards, pimps, the most degraded and despicable. There were men that, by their careless habits, had wasted their earnings and disbanded their families. Some of them were living in filth and vice, and some in crime. And yet, last January, about a hundred of these men came up in a body and called upon me, and a better looking set of men I never beheld. They were clothed and in their right mind. We received at one time some forty into the church out of this body of men; and one of the most affecting things I know of is that this class, two or three times a year, gives an entertainment to all the parents of the children in the Bethel Mission. They give it themselves. We furnish the room and lights, but they order a supper, with cake, confections, ice-cream, tea, and coffee. They have music, and also some little amusement—tableaux, or something of the kind—got up for them. They invite all the fathers and mothers of the children in the Bethel Mission. Each of the members of the Bible class wears his little rosette to show he is a manager; and each one is expected to be on the floor to entertain the guests, and to see that every one is happy, comfortable, talked to, and fed. To see these hundred and fifty men,—one of whom said, in relating his experience: ‘I know all about rum; I have made it, I have sold it, and I have drunk it to the very uttermost,’—to see such men in the house of God, entertainers, calling in the parents of the poor, wandering children, is enough to make tears come from anybody’s eyes.

“I do not believe you ever could have reached those men except by taking the word of God in your hand, calling them together in a place where they felt at home, and then going step by step with them through the truth, teaching them Sunday after Sunday; and while you are doing this, calling out their sympathies, making them work for each other—for this is what this class is doing—one here and one there, raising contributions by which they are able to sustain men and get them on their feet till they can get work again. There have been literally hundreds of families regathered.”

Again, referring to another class: “I have one teacher

in my Home School of whom I do not hesitate to say that in ten years he has been the instrument of converting one hundred and fifty young men, and chiefly by the application of the truth as it is in Jesus, in the Bible class ; and I have found that while our Sunday schools are greatly blessed, there has been no other agency employed in our church that is comparable to our Bible classes for adults, young men and old."

The Plymouth Mission and the Bethel School are doing a grand work amongst the poor and degraded in that part of the city. It is indisputable that our regular churches can never reach and impress the poorest and lowest classes except through mission schools or some other similar organisation. Mission schools are "the tenders of the fleet." "Our churches are men-of-war; our mission schools are little steam-yachts that these men-of-war send out into the shallower waters, or where they cannot go. Every city church ought to have one or two chickens of this kind under its wing." On this important question Mr. Beecher expresses himself on this wise: "There are, in the establishment of these mission schools, two or three principles that I think should be borne in mind as the foundation of all success. First, a mission school ought not, in my judgment, to be placed in a slum. If you are going into neighbourhoods where there is degradation and vice, and all manner of nastiness and rottenness, it is not best to preach the gospel there permanently. Go in to them, and visit them; but if you are to establish an institution, draw people out of that miry pit on to the edge of virtue and neatness and order. It will be easier to draw people out of disorder up to the borders of order than to teach them in the midst of their disorder. There is something in going out of their ill-ventilated houses, their unlighted dirty streets, up to a place which is quiet, which has some element of beauty about it. It becomes attractive to them, and they like to do it, provided they think the place is still within easy reach, and is their own.

"Next, I affirm that a mission school, as a general thing, should remain a mission school. I refuse utterly to allow any of our schools to be nascent churches. Not that it may

not be a good way to send out a school, and thus prepare the way for a church. There are many cases in which that is a proper thing to do. But ordinarily, in outlying neglected neighbourhoods, mission schools are better for the people than churches; for this reason, that they really are churches in the primitive sense of the term, and that the mode of instruction obtaining there is better adapted to the wants of that class of people than is the instruction which they would be likely to get in a church of the ordinary pattern. Our churches tend to extinguish sociality. Their congregations are respectable. They rise high in many elements; but the low, the poor, the ignorant, the vicious, are not susceptible yet of these higher things. Where they are brought into our churches, they are lonesome, they are little interested, and are very soon left behind. But if you send intelligent men and women down into their midst to put them into classes, and then to do the work face to face, looking to the individual man, calling him by name, going over to where you can lay your hand on him, you are rubbing in the truth in a manner that just suits his unsusceptible nature. You are giving to each man as he needs, not comprehensively as a whole congregation needs.

"There is another reason. I regard these mission schools as the nurseries for training the teachers themselves. All the good we have done to the poor and ignorant in Brooklyn is not comparable with that which has been done to my own people in the process. It would be enough, if only this one thing had fallen out, that the young men and women in my parish had been for years and years giving some of their best time, their best thoughts, their freshest hours, their sweetest enthusiasm, their most disinterested charities to this noble work. They have gone down into the field and made the work of taking care of these men their own work. There are, and have been, many children of wealth and culture engaged in this mission work, who gave up to it not only hours in each single day—meeting in council, meeting in little evening parties that have been arranged for this purpose—but pretty nearly the whole of their Sunday, except the hour of our morning service, and who carry this on for five or ten years, fascinated with it,

I might say. Now, this building-up of these persons makes them worth a hundred times as much to society and to the church as they would be had they merely been recipients, going with open mouth, always eating, and never using the strength which came from digested food. These missions at home keep alive the disinterestedness of men to such a degree, that I have come almost to think the church which has no mission feeling in it, no impetus to go outside of itself, no thought of anything except how to take care of itself, is scarcely a Christian church. I do not think that vital piety is long to be sustained in any body of men gathered together for church services where there is no mission spirit; that is, a spirit of disinterested labour for those who cannot repay you.

“Our mission schools have also accomplished another thing for which I am very grateful. I am ashamed to see great churches, whose wealth is counted by millions, build themselves stately houses, give to them everything that can make them comfortable in the pew, attractive in the choir, eloquent and desirable in the pulpit, and when they have done, pay their minister and all the expenses liberally, and then sit themselves down and fold around themselves the robe of complacency, saying, ‘There, if the Lord don’t think we have done well, He is unreasonable.’ What have they done but for themselves? They have embellished the chariot which is carrying them to heaven, as they think, though sometimes that is a mistake. They have simply made provision for their own religious enjoyment.

“Churches gather together families, and take care of them. They are institutions for families. They forget all outside of their own walls; they forget the community in which they are, which is under their care. If some few of their members are stirred up to open a mission school in a destitute neighbourhood, what usually happens? With very little interest on the part of the majority of the church, a few disinterested persons go down among the poor and hire a hall. They have to pay almost all of the rent out of their own pockets. They have a dilapidated hall, neither carpeted nor decorated, gaunt and drear; and they gather together a few on Sundays, teaching them the best way they

can. And this is the offering of that church to the poor! That starveling band of teachers in a little miserable, wretched out-of-the-way place—that is what they give! They themselves sumptuously fed, living in a gospel palace, having nothing neglected which their hearts or tastes could wish; yet when they come to the poor, they take the scraps and mouldy rinds to give to them.

“Now, I hold that every church which wants to do good should give not what it has left over, or what it stingily thinks it can spare, to the poor. That which you give to the poor ought to represent that which God has done for you; it ought to represent the freshness, beauty, art, and sweetness which prevail in the household of the givers.

“When, therefore, we wanted to build our Bethel, when application was made to us as a church to take the school off the hands of those who had been carrying it, I gathered the people together and said to them: ‘It is to be determined to-night by vote whether you shall take this school and care for it; but if you do, I want you to understand what you must do. I will not consent to the taking of this school as a poor lame poverty school. You must build them better quarters than you have for yourselves, and must treat that school so that they shall have in the very offerings you bring to them some sense of the richness which Christianity has brought to you.’ They assented to it. Now, our own church is not to be compared for beauty and embellishment with the Bethel. That building, with the ground, cost some eighty thousand dollars. The free reading-room is filled with pleasant pictures. In the appropriate rooms we have all the elements of housekeeping that are necessary. The teachers once a month have their tea there together. Every quarter the schools have a festival there. It is a complete little household in all its appointments. Every part of it is fine in taste, ample and excellent in the quality and quantity of the things provided. We spare nothing for them. We have given them as good an organ as Mr. Hook can build. We spend five thousand dollars a year for the expense of running that school. It is entirely a free-will offering. Whatever they contribute goes to mission work. In so far as the school is concerned, we have made it no second-

class car, while we are riding to heaven in the first-class. We have given them the first, and take our chances in the second.

"Now, where you organise disinterestedly in this way, and give the gospel, not in its lean, meagre development, in its poverty and wretchedness; where you give the gospel in its inflorescence, in that state in which it has had time to root and grow and blossom; where you embody the gospel in all its brightness and beauty, as the source of all that is joyous in your own house—take that down to them; send with it your best children, your ripest and sweetest, your most disinterested. Let these make themselves at home with the poor, and be to them, week by week, their counsellors and advisers.

"Come in with me on Friday afternoon, which is the afternoon for prayer among the women and for telling of their wants. It is enough to melt a heart of stone. That little saintly woman that presides there, whose name I will not mention, is to them, as it were, what the Virgin Mary is to the more devout and intelligent Catholics. Her ears are open to all their troubles. If one has a sick child or a sick husband, if one has had a death in the family, if a husband has been abusive, if there is discouragement, if the boys have turned out badly—whatever their troubles, it is their privilege to come there on Friday afternoon and make known all their wants. This woman sympathises with them, counsels them, comforts them. And this work is going on all the time, from year's end to year's end. There is no vacation in that school. Our Home School has a vacation, because our scholars are all children of prosperous parents; but poverty knows no vacation. The grief and sorrow that come in the lower walks of life know no intermission. We always keep open this house of refuge, to which all the poor and the needy come. I tell you, it keeps the hearts of my people very soft and sweet. There is a revival feeling in the church all the time, coming very largely from the effects of our mission work."

It would be quite easy to go on, to any length, with this enumeration of the good qualities of Plymouth Church, but enough has been said already to show that it is a church of great earnestness, vigour, and intensity in the discharge of

its various Christian duties. Its dominant virtue is benevolence. Its creed might be reduced to one word—CHRIST. It is continually sacrificing itself for the glory of God and the welfare of mankind. Its liberality is proverbial. Its charities are carried on the wings of the wind to all parts of the world. Its sympathies flow in all directions. For instance, at the time of the great Chicago fire in 1871, Mr. Beecher preached a characteristic sermon, and a collection was taken for the relief of the sufferers, which amounted to £1000. Its contributions to all good and benevolent societies are most generous. There is no stinginess in Plymouth Church. Paying its pastor the handsome salary of £5000 a year, it neglects no good cause whatever. It does not support him so royally at the expense of crippling its generosity in other quarters. And this extraordinary magnanimity is not the result of everlasting dinning and coaxing, and urging from the pulpit, but the spontaneous outflowing of hearts touched and subdued by the spirit of the Saviour. It is very seldom that Mr. Beecher makes an appeal for money. When money is wanted for any purpose, he has only to mention the fact, and the money is instantly forthcoming. But he knows the art of begging, yea, and of scolding too, when circumstances require. Many years ago, when Plymouth Church was not what it is to-day, he was obliged to make the following appeal, which explains itself: "Two weeks ago, I told you that three thousand dollars had got to be raised to pay for the repairs of this house. The plates were sent round, and about six hundred dollars were raised. I was heartily ashamed, and have not got over it yet. Last week the trustees came, and asked me if I would name the matter again, and I said, 'No, I will *not*.' But this week, upon their renewed application, I have consented to speak once more. If this does not do, you may pay your debt how you can; for I will never mention it again. I am not going to be a pump to be thrust into men's pockets to force up what ought to come up freely. When a surgeon comes to a place where he must cut, he had better *cut*. For more than a year I have seen that our plate-collections grew meaner and meaner. I did not want to face you with such things as I have got to say to-day, and I put it off as long

as I could. Now I shall speak plainly once for all, not having the face to bring the matter up again. This debt has got to be paid, and will you meet it honourably and pay it like men, or will you let it drip, drip, drip out of you reluctantly, a few dollars at a time? You can take your choice. I am not going to try to drill money out of you as I would drill stones. Our lecture-room holds about three hundred people, and we collect from thirty to eighty dollars there every time we pass the plate. Our best Christians attend the weekly meetings, and they are always the most generous. In this congregation, that numbers over three thousand, we do not average *one cent. per head* in our collections.

“While there are, thank God, many of His poor among us who cannot give Him a shilling without making a difference in all their arrangements for a whole week, there are hundreds of men here who ought to be ashamed *ever* to give anything but gold, or at least a bill. And they *are* ashamed to do it. Don’t they, when the plate approaches, and they have put their fingers in their pockets and selected a quarter—the smoothest one that they can find—use admirable tact and skill in conveying to the plate, so that no one shall see what they give? Pious souls! they do not allow their left hand to know what their right hand doeth. If they have two bills, one good, one broken, they will generally give the broken one to the Lord. The amount of meanness among respectable people is appalling. One needs to take a solar microscope in order to see some men. I am willing to *give* my share, to *do* what the trustees desire; I shall *say* no more.” And it is not likely that he had occasion to say any more on that subject. One genuine old-fashioned scolding like that ought to last for twenty years.

It is often alleged by casual attendants, and taken for granted by a few others who know absolutely nothing about the matter, that Plymouth Church is more like a theatre than a place of worship, that there are no signs of reverence and devoutness to be seen in the congregation, and that Mr. Beecher tolerates, if he does not encourage, certain practices which are a desecration of the Sabbath and a profanation of the house of God. This, certainly, is a very grave and

serious charge—in fact a more damaging charge could not be easily preferred ; but can it be sustained and proved ? It is said, for instance, that every Sabbath morning before the service, newspapers are as general throughout the church as we sometimes find them to be at an evening entertainment in a public hall, and that the people read them with great avidity and supreme enjoyment until the preacher rises to offer the opening prayer. Now, in answer to this charge, made for the most part by those who are not friendly to Mr. Beecher, we have to say, first, that although we have attended Plymouth Church several times within the last twelve years, we have never witnessed such a practice. Newspapers are *not* commonly read in Plymouth Church. In the next place, Mr. Beecher has referred to this charge from the pulpit, and asserted that if newspapers are read in the church it is done by strangers, not by members of the congregation. It is true that both before and after the service the people exhibit a disposition to be sociable and friendly among themselves. Hand-shaking, noddings of recognition, audible salutations among those who are near one another—these things may be observed there every Sabbath in the year ; but is there anything out of place in them ? Is the Sabbath broken, or the sanctuary dishonoured by them ? Are they contrary to any principle enunciated in the New Testament ? Does Christianity countenance stiffness, rigidness, inflexibility, and coldness of manner in its adherents, or does it tend to inspire them with sympathy and love for one another, and a disposition to become interested in one another's affairs ? Most assuredly the overwhelming majority of our churches make no endeavour to cultivate sociableness and unity and mutual affection among their members. Reverence is doubtless a transcendent grace, but even reverence, unaccompanied with other virtues, is, like faith, dead and of no account. On its right hand should always be found brotherly love, and on its left genial, spontaneous amiability. Let there be introduced, therefore, into every church more of the home feeling and of that genuine sympathy which would enable all the children of God to stand on the platform of perfect equality. Let there be no class distinctions ; let there be none of that

formalism which obtains so disastrously in society, freezing up the tenderest and sweetest sentiments of which the human heart is capable, and let there be no unnatural reserve and false dignity in the church of Jesus Christ—and the result will be the beginning of the reign of prosperity and joy and happiness on the earth.

But it is maintained by some that the services themselves in Plymouth Church are not often conducted with that degree of solemnity and gravity which ought to characterise Divine worship. The word "levity" is sometimes mentioned in this connection. We are told that the indecent custom of applauding the preacher by acclamations, by clapping, and even occasionally by the waving of handkerchiefs, has prevailed there throughout the years. This charge, it must be confessed, is in a measure true; nor would Mr. Beecher himself have any wish to deny it. In years gone by, especially when the church used to be so deeply agitated and concerned about public and national questions, and the tide of popular feeling ran so very high and so very strong, and when Mr. Beecher was so thoroughly roused, Plymouth Church was often made to ring with demonstrations of applause and with expressions of enthusiastic adherence to the eternal and unchangeable principles of truth and liberty, as disclosed in the gospel dispensation. On one occasion, at the time of the civil war, Mr. Beecher preached to two companies of the "Brooklyn Fourteenth," many of whom were members of his church, just as they were on the point of starting for the field of battle. The state of feeling in the community may be easily imagined. He chose for his text these words of the Psalmist, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." He hastened over the history of the American flag, showing how God had given it to their fathers because they feared Him, and how they had handed it down from age to age to their children, that it might be displayed in the cause of righteousness and truth; but at this point he became as one inspired, and in a burst of impassioned eloquence exclaimed: "And displayed it shall be. Advanced full against the morning light, and borne with the growing and glowing day, it shall take the last

ruddy beams of the night, and from the Atlantic wave clear across with eagle flight to the Pacific, that banner shall float, meaning all the liberty which it has ever meant. From the North, where snows and mountain ice stand solitary, clear to the glowing Tropics and the Gulf, that banner that has hitherto waved shall wave and wave for ever—every star, every band, every thread and fold significant of liberty.” But here he was interrupted by the most clamorous applause ever heard. The people were compelled to give vent in some way to their overflowing irresistible enthusiasm. Why, under the circumstances, it would have been utterly impossible for patriotic God-fearing persons to control themselves. And yet, because on such an occasion as that, under the spell of the greatest orator of the age, an assembly of Christian people did not refrain from demonstrations of applause, Plymouth Church is pronounced as a church that has no regard either for the sanctity of the Sabbath day or for the sacredness of the house of God. Is stolid indifference to the fate of a whole tribe of human beings a sign of piety? Does Christianity condemn patriotism, and the expression of it on proper occasions? God forbid. It teaches us to be a hundred-fold more patriotic than we otherwise could be, and it encourages the most enthusiastic and demonstrative expression of patriotism when circumstances require.

We do not say this to justify applause in churches. We do not believe in it. Neither would we condemn it, under peculiar circumstances. It has been in the church from the beginning, but always a source of trouble and annoyance to those who were the objects of it. It existed in the time of Chrysostom, though he severely censured it. We find him saying: “Of what avail to me is this applause and tumult? One thing only I require of you—that you prove to me your approbation and obedience by your works. That will be praise for me—gain for yourselves; that will be to me a greater honour than the imperial crown. I desire not your applause and clamour. I have but one wish—that you hear me with calmness and attention, and that ye practice my precepts.” How similar in tone are these words of Mr. Beecher: “I know it is hard for men that are full of feeling

not to give expression to it ; but excuse me if I request you to refrain from demonstrations of applause while I am speaking. It is not because I think Sunday too good a day, nor the church too holy a place for patriotic Christian men to express their feelings at such a time as this and in behalf of such sentiments, but because by too frequent repetition applause becomes stale and common, that I make this request. Besides, outward expression is not our way. We are rather of a silent stock. We let our feelings work inwardly, so that they may have deeper channels and fuller floods."

We have never heard applause of any kind, nor even laughter, in Plymouth Church. Mr. Beecher does not indulge in so many humorous remarks during these years as he did fifteen and twenty years ago. It would have been a sin, however, not to laugh under such conditions as the following. In order to illustrate the difference between an established character and occasional impulse, he went through a supposed dialogue, as follows: "A friend says to me, 'What a selfish, hard, miserly man Mr. So-and-So is! He never does a generous act.' I reply, 'Are you not mistaken? Certainly you are, for I heard the other day of his giving a barrel of flour to a poor widow with six children.' 'Yes, yes (with sceptical inflection), that may be so, but I reckon it's the first spark seen out of that man's chimney for twenty years.'"

Or, to take another illustration, he would not be a saint who could control his risibles under the following apt remark: "A rich man ought to be like a fire-engine, which sucks in at one end and spurts out at the other (with accompanying upward gesture, dramatising the operation), putting out the fire of hell which the devil is always kindling." Such remarks are as natural to him as breathing, and he would be doing violence to his own nature not to utter them. Humour plays on his lips and dances in his eyes ; and he is oftentimes "humorous by feature or tone, when he is entirely unaware of it."

Plymouth Church has its faults and shortcomings like all other churches, no doubt ; but we have neither the time nor the inclination to dwell upon them. It is far more profitable and pleasant to think of its numerous merits, which no one with open eyes can fail to see. Within its sacred walls we

have been blessed as we have been nowhere else, and never shall we be able to forget it. Its minister, its members, known and unknown, its very walls are dear to our heart; and from the depth of our soul we pray, in the words of the Psalmist, "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces."





CHAPTER V.

THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS.

THERE is a general impression abroad in the world that Mr. Beecher is not quite sound in the faith. He is a suspected man. Some maintain that he is an out-and-out heretic, believing in absolutely nothing, having cast overboard all the fundamental, cardinal doctrines of the gospel; others, that he is astray on one or two points only, while in the main perfectly sound; and others still, that he is simply a superior teacher of ethics, an excellent, incomparable guide in the realm of morals, but not an evangelical preacher at all. Mr. Spurgeon and Dr. Talmage are known to be staunch believers in the old-style Calvinism, and they are not afraid to preach it to crowded audiences; but Mr. Beecher is supposed to be neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian, but an indefinite, nebulous, mystic, unreliable, dangerous, and misleading rhetorician. We are told that he holds all theologies in utter contempt, and speaks of theological systems with the tongue of a cynic. It is not our intention to allege that he is in thorough harmony with any existing school of belief; but we do hope to be able to convince our readers that hitherto he has been sadly misunderstood, and shamefully misrepresented by overwhelming majorities, both in England and America. Such has been the fate, alas! of almost every superior man in every age and every country. Ignorance and prejudice are usually at the root of this mischief. When

we ask a friend, "What do you think of Mr. Beecher?" the answer generally is, "Oh, he is an able man, an oratorical star of the first magnitude; *but then he is not orthodox.*" But should we press our friend to specify wherein he is heterodox, he might find it a somewhat difficult task to do so.

Mr. Beecher does not despise theology, *as such*. "I have often indulged myself," he says, "in words that would seem to undervalue theologians; but you know I do not mean it. I profess to be a theologian myself; my father was a theologian; my brothers are all theologians; and so are many men whom I revere, and who are the brightest lights of genius, I think, that have ever shone in the world. I believe in theologians, and yet I think it is perfectly fair to make game of them. I do not think there is anything in this world, whether it be man, or that which is beneath man, that is not legitimate food for innocent, unvicious fun; and if it should cast a ray of light on the truth, and alleviate the tediousness of a lecture now and then, to have a slant at theologians, why, I think they can stand it. It will not hurt them, and it may amuse us. So let me speak freely—the more so, because I affirm that it is indispensable for every man who is to do a considerable religious work during a long period, or with any degree of self-consistency, to be a theologian. He must have method; there must be a sequence of ideas in his thought. And if the work runs long enough and far enough, and embraces many things, there must be a system of applying means to ends, there must be a knowledge of instruments. These things are theology, in a sense—a part of it, at any rate." In the same connection he says that "philosophising follows of necessity after culture, and is one of the fruits of intelligence," so that to merely know facts is to be no higher than an animal. He does not believe in a great many theological methods and systems which have prevailed in different ages, but he does not despise them. He is conscious, indeed, that they have been of great service in helping to elucidate the truths of the Bible, and in inducing men to meditate upon the sublime and glorious principles of Revelation.

But, then, what does he mean when, in a burst of indignation, he exclaims, "Away with these theological systems,

these abstract formulas, which destroy the kernel and leave me nothing but the shell ; which press out the life-blood and leave me nothing but the stock?" Again : "They are the chill of Christian life. They stand between us and our God like a thick cloud. Sweep it hence ! Let us see Jesus as Paul and John saw Him, with the eye of love and not of intellect." Judging alone from these sentences, we would say that he is inconsistent with himself. In one breath he professes to admire theology, and to be himself a theologian ; in the next, he denounces it in severest terms. How is it possible to reconcile the two statements ? Or which of them are we to take as conveying his real conviction and belief on the subject ? The true explanation is to be found in the fact, that while he approves of theology at divinity halls and in the study, he regards it as the source of incalculable evil when introduced into the pulpit. Theological systems are good enough in their place, but that place is not the pulpit. He has no faith in scientific preaching. Our systematic theologies, our "bodies of divinity," our "Christian dogmatics," as a rule, travel in a straight line through a long catalogue of all-important subjects, such as Theology proper, Anthropology, Soteriology, and Eschatology ; and they never deviate a hairsbreadth from the path until they reach the end. Years ago it was the custom of ministers to preach in that same order. The great John Howe, in many respects the greatest of all Puritan divines, delivered that learned and masterly treatise, entitled, "The Principles of the Oracles of God," in a series of sixty-five sermons. The eminent Dr. Dwight, of Yale College, edified his congregation by preaching to them on one hundred and seventy-three successive Sabbath mornings that admirable body of divinity which we now have in five large volumes. Doctrinal preaching was the order of the day. A truth was taken up and considered, not so much in its bearings on practical human life, as in its relations to other truths in a system. Congregations were told in what respects "regeneration" differed from "justification, adoption, sanctification," and also what went before and what came after it. Whatever the doctrine under consideration, its various relations in a system would generally occupy the

whole of the preacher's time. Instead of feeding the people with that food which their circumstances demanded, the pulpit invariably supplied them with that which came in the stereotyped order of scientific theology. Under such lifeless preaching the churches were withering away, or sinking into the lowest depths of spiritual indifference and indolence. Once in a while a young minister would exhaust his theologic lore at a very early date. Dr. John Dick, now of world-wide renown as the author of very interesting "Lectures on Theology," is said to have gone, in the early days of his ministry, to a brother minister in the deepest distress, saying to him, "What shall I do? I have preached all I know to the people, and have nothing else to give them. I have gone through the Catechism, and what have I more?" His friend was wiser, and replied, "The Catechism! Take the Bible, man. It will take you a long time to exhaust that."

When Mr. Beecher came to Brooklyn thirty years ago, the majority of the churches were empty. The ministers were all able men, learned, classical scholars, and profound divines; but their preaching did not attract the crowds. Their sermons were elaborate essays on Christian doctrines, bristling with technical terms and classical quotations, but destitute of all directness of application and definiteness of purpose, and falling upon the ears of the people like so much unmeaning sound. Mr. Beecher, his heart burning with holy enthusiasm, grieved in his spirit, registered a solemn vow that he would fight that style of sermonising and of preaching with the whole energy and fire of his nature. He entered upon the contest by endeavouring to preach a living, practical gospel himself. Instead of taking up a certain doctrine with the view of ascertaining its exact position in a given system of truth, he would consider it in its multitudinous bearings upon the life and conversation of his hearers. Instead of entertaining his people with learned disquisitions on some abstruse and perplexing questions, he sought to do them good by disturbing their spiritual peace, by making them heartily dissatisfied with themselves and their prospects, by calling into action their moral sense, and by compelling them to stand face to face with the grand ideal of the Christian life. Instead of humouring their

lethargy and their worldliness with long-drawn, finely-finished essays on the Trinity, Predestination, the Fall, and the origin of Evil, he tried to touch their consciences and move their hearts by reminding them that life was given them that they might use it for others, and that unless they did so use it God would not hold them guiltless in the day of judgment. He made no attempt to preach theology. For a time he ignored it altogether. Then he began to decry it, calling it all manner of names, ridiculing it before vast audiences; styling it a mere skeleton, with neither skin nor flesh nor sinews upon it. His chief argument against it was that it was effete, no longer capable of producing any good in the world. The whole country was now astir. A few large-hearted, unselfish, and earnest Christian people hailed the new preacher as "the Paul of the nineteenth century;" but the staid, narrow-minded, bigoted, orthodox divines denounced him as "rearing up a generation of scoffers." In his opinion the prominent error of the Church of that day was excessive reverence for creeds, confessions, and systems; but according to the general conviction of the majority of preachers, to utter a single word against the venerable articles of faith was infinitely blasphemous. It then became a question as to what kind of preaching the times did really require. The discussion was carried on for some time with great zeal and eminent ability on both sides. Long and eloquent articles appeared in all religious magazines, and even the secular press was not indifferent in the matter. In order to give our readers some idea of the matter and manner of the controversy, we will reproduce here an article written by Mr. Beecher, entitled, "Preaching to the Times":—

"The pulpit seeks the education of man's moral nature by the power of divine truth. The pulpit begins where all other lectureships end. It aims at the conversion of the soul from worldliness and selfishness to a spiritual and truly godly state. This result is to be sought chiefly by the power of the thoughts and the facts which God has revealed concerning Himself, and then by the power of the truths in like manner revealed concerning man's nature and character, his immortality and destiny. There is an intrinsic fitness in these highest possible truths of the Divine Being

and government to work upon the soul, and develop its spiritual nature; and when, by God's Holy Spirit, the heart is aroused and excited to that degree which makes it susceptible of feeling and understanding such spiritual truths, and it yields itself to be imbued by them, and controlled by them, it has been born again. It has become the new child of the Spirit of the Word.

"Now, all preaching is to be judged by its relation to this end. That discourse which discloses to the human soul the real character of God, and the essential relations which He sustains to men, so that the thoughts do not rest upon the vehicle, but upon the thing itself—the very truth—is *preaching*.

"That discourse which leaves the thoughts upon the sermon itself, not upon the truth which it seeks to convey, is a secular lecture, no matter whether it be on the subject of the Trinity, of Sovereignty, of Heaven, or any other sacred theme. An elaborate sermon, stuffed full of scholastic learning, tied and bound by nice qualifications and balancings, or split up and fringed with subtle definitions and fine distinctions, whether it be upon the decrees, upon human agency and responsibility, or upon any other solemn topic, is a mere philosophical lecture, unfit for the pulpit or the Sabbath.

"A sermon that is dry, cold, dull, soporific, is a pulpit monster, and is just as great a violation of the sanctity of the pulpit as the other absurd extreme of profane levity. Men may hide or forsake God's living truth by the way of stupid dulness, just as much as by pert imagination. A *solemn nothing* is just as wicked as a *witty nothing*. Men confound earnestness with solemnity. A man may be eagerly earnest, and may not be very solemn. They may also be awfully solemn, without a particle of earnestness. But solemnity has a reputation. A man may be a repeater of endless distinctions, a lecturer in the pulpit of mere philosophical niceties, or he may be a repeater of stale truisms; he may smother living truths by conventional forms and phrases, and if he put on a very solemn face, use a very solemn tone, employ very solemn gestures, and roll along his vamped-up sermon with professional solemnity

above an audience of sound men ; men at least soundly asleep—that will pass for decorous handling of God's truth. The old pharisaism is not dead yet. The difference between Christ and His contemporary teachers was, that He spake life-truths in life-forms, with the power of His own life in their utterance. The rabbis spake old orthodoxy, dead as a mummy ; but they spake it very reverently. They might not do any good, but they never violated professional propriety. Nobody lived ; everybody died about them. But, then, their faces were sober, their robes exact, their manner mostly of the temple and the altar. They never forgot how to look, nor how to speak guttural solemnities, nor how to maintain professional dignity. They forgot nothing except living truths and living souls. And fifty years of ministration without any fruit in true godliness gave them no pain. It was charged to the account of Divine Sovereignty.

“Whoever hides the truth by embellishment of words, by a vain exhibition of wit or fancy, by opaque learning, by the impenetrable thickets of nice distinctions, by stupidity and lifelessness, by inane solemnity and sanctimonious conventionalism, is a desecrator of the pulpit and a breaker of the Sabbath day. Stupidity hides the truth just as fatally as liberty. Consecrated dulness is no better than flippant folly. If a window fails to let the light through, it makes little difference whether the obscuration comes from the web of a big, lazy spider, or from the nimble weavings of a hundred pert little spiders.

“God's truth really, earnestly, pungently spoken, for a direct and practical purpose, with distinct results constantly following, that is preaching, no matter what are the particular methods of speech. Doubtless some are better than others. But every sincere and truthful man must use that way by which God has enabled him to achieve success ; some by solid statements ; some by inexorable reasonings ; some by illustration and fancy ; some by facts and stories—just as God has given power to each one. But the test is the same in the highest and the lowest. *Fruit must follow.* The truth of God must shine through the human instrument and evince its divinity by signs following—the awakening

of the conscience, conviction of sin, conversion to God, and a life redeemed from selfishness, and set aglow with Christian goodness and benevolence.

"Nothing can more sharply exhibit the miserable imbecility which has come upon us, than the inability of men to perceive the difference between preaching 'politics,' 'social reform,' &c., and preaching God's truth in such a way that it shall sit in judgment upon these things, and every other deed of men, to try them, to explore and analyse them, and to set them forth, as upon the background of eternity, in their moral character, and in their relations to man's duty and God's requirements.

"Shall the whole army of human deeds go roaring along the public thoroughfares, and Christian men be whelmed in the general rush, and no man be found to speak the real moral nature of human conduct? Is the pulpit too holy, and the Sabbath too sacred, to bring individual courses and developments of society to the bar of God's Word for trial? Those who think so, and are crying out about the desecration of the pulpit with secular themes, are the lineal descendents of those Jews who thought the Sabbath so sacred that our Saviour desecrated it by healing the withered hand. Would to God that the Saviour would visit His Church, and heal withered hearts!"

The above powerful and eloquent letter contains Mr. Beecher's profound conviction as to the style of preaching required by the times, and gives us a notion of his own method of handling and applying divine truth. Whenever, therefore, we find him opposing and making game of theology, let us bear in mind that his objection lies not against theology in itself considered, but against the introduction of it into the pulpit. Let ministers study the science of theology as extensively and as profoundly as ever they can; let them wade knee-deep and neck-deep along the shore of the mighty ocean of theological lore; let them write theological treatises by the hundred, and split as many theological hairs as they can find, but let them beware of bringing philosophical niceties into the sacred pulpit. Generally speaking, busy men care absolutely nothing about creeds and confessions; but they are yearning with unutter-

able longing for some message of sympathy and condolence from the skies. Creeds are admirable, confessions are profitable in their place; but it would involve a horrible mockery of human sin and misery, and be the very height of absurdity to be everlastingly hugging and embracing them in the presence of troubled, care-worn, sin-burdened, tempest-tossed, and severely tempted human beings. Scientific theology is no food for human souls.

Mr. Beecher has exerted a very perceptible influence upon the American pulpit. Within the last twenty-five years, dry, dull, purely doctrinal preaching has gone entirely out of the fashion. Here and there a doctrine-loving preacher may still be seen, but he is looked upon as a fossil, as a mere piece of curiosity, almost as one of the seven wonders, and his followers are few and far between. There is more practical earnestness, there is a larger measure of living humanity, there is more directness of aim, there is a far greater singleness of purpose to be observed in the preaching of to-day than in that of any former period since the time of the Apostles; and it must be confessed that the Plymouth Pulpit has done much towards the bringing about of such a pleasant change. What would our Puritan Fathers say were they to visit our modern churches and listen to our modern preaching? What would they think of the mighty changes and revolutions which have been wrought since they left the earth for the mansions above? Why, they would fall down upon their knees and glorify God for His wonderful goodness to the children of men; for they, too, have undergone glorious changes since they were here below administering to those under their charge tough doses of theological truth, covered with a thick coating of technical terms. Jonathan Edwards was a grand preacher in his day; but even he would readily acknowledge that his *style* of preaching was far inferior to the style that obtains in the majority of our pulpits now. While all his sermons were very excellent in composition, and very searching in application, there was in them an element of interminable speculation which interfered seriously with their simplicity and directness. He is justly regarded as the greatest metaphysician America has ever produced, and

he was also in many respects the greatest preacher of his age; but in him the speculative, the metaphysical, and the logical predominate throughout. His was a gigantic intellect, and it stamped itself indelibly upon all his productions. What he was on a large scale, others were on a small one. But, to-day, a metaphysical, speculative preacher can scarcely be found in the whole of the United States. Most ministers there now are aiming to be moral forces to move men in the direction of a higher, nobler manhood. They are fishers of men. Their whole business is to arouse, inspire, exalt, and ennoble their hearers, and thereby prepare them for the solemn warfare of life. In this realm Mr. Beecher is indeed a prince, and has a large and glorious following, not in America alone, but in Great Britain as well.

But notwithstanding the fact that he is intensely practical and direct in his aim, and does not attempt to systematise his ideas, yet his sermons teem with living, burning thoughts. He is a profound thinker. He thinks not in the direction of any particular system, but of life. His thoughts are not so many columns to support a theological structure, but glowing sparks from the furnace of his heart, wherewith he seeks to kindle the flame of disinterestedness and nobility in the hearts of those who are under his charge. He does not place them in their respective positions in a creed, but makes them to fit into the various exigencies and experiences of everyday life. His theology is a theology of the heart, not so much of the head. He deals exclusively with living facts, and expounds them as circumstances demand.

He belongs to none of the existing schools of thought. He stands alone. He is not in thorough harmony with any branch of orthodoxy; and yet we dare not class him with the free-thinkers. He is not an original investigator of truth, and yet he thinks in unison with no one. He is a theological phenomenon. He is strong, intense, deep, fiery; but he does not run in any of the current ruts, nor does he open a new rut himself. He is broad, comprehensive, many-sided, full, but not up to any of the standards of measure commonly used in the world. He resembles, in some respects, many of the giants of the past, such as

Theodore Parker, Channing, F. W. Robertson, Maurice, and Charles Kingsley ; but he has such strong characteristics of his own that we cannot say he is a disciple of any of those illustrious men. - He is intensely himself. A member of no school himself, he leaves no school behind him, though many of his thoughts, conceptions of truth, beautiful illustrations, and sublime applications, are destined to live on to the very end of time.

We will now endeavour to present a few of Mr. Beecher's thoughts, and that, as far as possible, in Mr. Beecher's own words. His views of things, whether right or wrong, have much to do with his wonderful success. His theology, whether orthodox or heterodox, represents himself ; he and his theology are one. Out of such stuff are martyrs made. Some men's opinions, like their clothes, can be taken off and put on again at will ; Mr. Beecher's opinions, on the contrary, are so many outgrowths of himself. He has never changed them. Some of them may have developed more than others, but his fundamental beliefs were substantially the same forty years ago as they are to-day. This fact is worth remembering, especially in an age so fickle, and restless, and changeable as the present. In this chapter we propose to dwell upon his views of the Deity, of Man, of the Person of Jesus Christ, and of the Atonement.

1. *The Deity*.—On this august, transcendent subject, Mr. Beecher does not differ from our most orthodox divines. He blankly refuses to accompany them on many of their journeys of speculation ; but he does not give expression to anything that is out of harmony with the utterances of the most exacting orthodoxy. He believes in the doctrine of the Trinity, though he attempts no explanation of the mystery. How explicit is the following statement :—"It is not required of us to form a clear idea of the mode of Divine existence. It is everywhere said or implied that this transcends our capacity. This might have been anticipated ; for men cannot understand human nature. The least of all their knowledge is in this direction. And less and less do we understand human nature as we push inquiry back to the source and ground of being. How much less, then, is

it to be expected that we should understand a Being who opens His attributes in a realm above all search and experience, and whose existence is vaster and more complicated than ours! How much less is it to be expected that we should understand the soul and the nature of God himself! But the simple reader of the New Testament will find that the Unit of the Old Testament has been superseded by a Divine Being, represented by the terms 'Father,' 'Son,' and 'Holy Spirit'—a one God with three manifestations answering to our idea of personalities." This is, certainly, not a satisfactory definition of the doctrine of the Trinity, inasmuch as the terms *manifestation* and *personality* are perilously misleading. Our idea of personality is such, that to speak of God as existing in three personalities would be the same as to maintain that He exists as *three distinct, separate beings*, which is absurd. But Mr. Beecher's meaning evidently is, that in some sense the Divine Being is one, and that in some other sense He is three—a Trinity. The theory of tri-theism he rejects with disdain.

He does not believe that any solution of this profound mystery is possible. He looks upon the various theories which have been devised by philosophers and divines to account for or to explain it, if not with righteous contempt, yet with sincere pity. "Let them rejoice in their theories who will," he exclaims; "I have none. I do not wish any; nor do I much respect any that have been found." He cares nothing about the history of the doctrine. He never refers to the celebrated Council of Nice, nor does he accept the teaching of any theologian, in ancient or modern times, as being in any sense authoritative. Nevertheless, he does not believe the doctrine under an intellectual protest. His reason does not charge his faith with excessive boldness or undue rashness. Though he cannot remove the difficulties connected with the Biblical representation of the Divine existence, he is yet perfectly satisfied that there is no element of contradiction or unreasonableness in it. On this point he makes the following conjectures:—

"The only course which lies open to us is to accept both of these representations, and not attempt to reconcile them; to say that, according to New Testament usage, God is spoken

of sometimes as one God, and at other and diverse times as 'Father,' 'Son,' and 'Holy Spirit.' This, it seems to me, is the simplest method, as well as the most honest—to say that God is one, and in some respects three. Men say they cannot understand how God can be three if He is one. My difficulty is not there. I can understand *threeness* a great deal better than I can *oneness*. But it does not depend upon my understanding and exposition of it, nor yours. It is simply a question, Will you take the sum of all the representations of the inspired text? or will you demand that those representations shall first be ground and kneaded into a theory, and then take that theory or that philosophy? If a man says, 'Do you understand the unity of God?' I do not; there is very little of God that I do understand. If he says, 'Do you understand the tri-personality of God?' No; only in a presumptive sense. There is very little of the Divine nature that I do understand. 'How, then, if you do not understand unity, can you hold that He is both one and three?' I say, not three in the same respects in which He is one. But I hold there are possibilities of Divine existence that justify me in believing that God is revealed in the New Testament as one God in three persons. Not that the method is soluble; not that I perceive the method of it—I perceive the *text* of it. And I find there are fewer difficulties in taking the face of Scripture than there are in taking the philosophical deductions which men make from the face of Scripture. We understand neither unity nor trinity in any enlarged sense. We find in the New Testament representations of both of them. They are not in conflict necessarily, since complexity may consist with unity. We are not to suppose that it is presumptively true that God is one and three simply because there is no analogue among men of this kind. I shall show that there is an analogue in nature—that is, in the whole sum of being or existence. But because our acquaintance with vital, intelligent, sentient life is limited; because the class of beings with which we are familiar exist in unity—unity and diversity so far as faculty is concerned, but unity without diverse personality—we are not to suppose that this exhausts all possible modes of being; and certainly

we are not to suppose that man is the model of existence, so that God may be supposed to exist in the same philosophical method that man does. There is no reason in philosophy why we should take that ground; but there are reasons and presumptions why we should not adventure to declare, that we have a right to reason upon the mode of Divine existence, and say, 'It is possible only as unity;' or, 'It is possible only as trinity.' No one is to suppose that human life exhausts all the possible modes of existence.

"We are to remember that the analogues of creation point otherwise—namely, to the existence of a vast scale of unity in complexity. The animal kingdom springs originally from a unit—a cell. The lowest form of animated existence is a cell. The animal kingdom rises by differentiation, or by diverse parts, growing toward complexity. The lowest form of animated being is unity; and every step upward is multiplication in unity of parts, and difference of functions, until we reach the highest form of life, which is man. There complexity has assumed a degree quite unparalleled in anything beneath man, transcending the understanding of the very being himself of whom it is predicated.

"If, then, we go right on to beings still higher than man, the presumption of analogy is, not only that there will be modes of being different from ours, but that this difference will be in the direction of unity with infinite complexity; and that infinite complexity may be easily imagined to be, not merely an agglomeration of faculties in one being, but a range higher than this, so that being shall be agglomerated in a being, and that there shall be personality grouped into unity. At any rate, those who accept the face of the New Testament Scripture, and who believe in one God existing in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are not to be charged with absurdity or unreasonableness.

"On the other hand, I take the broadest ground of natural science, and say that every single tendency and course of reasoning indicates that being augments, and that modes of being become larger, and more and more diverse, and that complexity rises from the lowest form of the animated kingdom, growing greater and greater, yet in

unity. So it is eminently, philosophically, and presumptively true, to say that superior beings will manifest complexity even more than we have known it in the inferior scale. When the New Testament, therefore, comes in without philosophy, and without explanation, and speaks of the higher existence of God as one, and at the same time as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or three persons brooding together, as it were, though we do not understand it, every one may say, 'This is the shadow of that which we might have suspected, even in the order of nature itself.'

"How shall we accept it? As a thing perfectly analysed and understood? No; I accept it merely as a fact stated. I do not require any one to tell me how it is. I simply ask that every one shall use the same language respecting God that the New Testament does, calling God one, and yet Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, united together in a region beyond the reach of our investigation—so united that trinity does not violate unity, nor unity make it inconsistent that there should be trinity."

The foregoing is about the only paragraph in all his writings in which Mr. Beecher attempts to make a contribution to the metaphysics of this abstruse doctrine. And he does not feel at home while making this. He is evidently in a hurry to be off to something else more congenial, practical, and useful. When the late Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, entered the domain of metaphysical theology, he was quite in his element, and his enthusiasm would kindle into an uncontrollable flame. His sermon on the Trinity is a masterpiece: its close reasoning; its elaborate argumentation; its luminous, straightforward honesty; the originality and freshness of its conception; the catholicity of its sentiments; the intense spirituality of its tone—all these characteristics combine to make it one of the most extraordinary sermons in the whole kingdom of homilies. But Mr. Beecher, in a sermon on the same subject, fails to make "the fur fly" until he manages to bid farewell to his metaphysics, and is off to the region of practical exhortation.

Now we pass on to consider his views of the Divine character; and it is here, in our opinion, that he rises into such manifest superiority over all other living preachers.

His treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity may not be very satisfactory to scientific theologians ; his explanations of the term *personality* may be considered more or less misleading in its tendency ; but when he comes to expound God's character in its relation to mankind, we all feel that he is truly a great man. Though he has never attempted to classify the Divine attributes after any method, old or new, yet he has rendered greater service to the Church by showing to which attributes we should give the highest prominence. It is love that he regards as the central quality or essence of the Divine nature, to which the other attributes are tributary. "Love is God's nature. Not that no other feeling exists in Him ; not that justice and abhorrence of evil are not co-ordinated with it ; not that these do not take part in the Divine administration among men ; but that the central and peculiarly Divine element is love, in which all other feelings live, within whose bounds they all act, to which they are servants, and for which they are messengers and helpers." "This is the true conception of God. This is that majestic and mighty Heart, rich, glowing, glorious, yearning, and desiring good, and scattering it as through the spheres He scatters light and atmosphere. This is that vast, voluminous God, that, when Paul looked up out from the cloudy world, from amidst its rain-drops, he saw riding triumphantly, and spreading His bow over the storms which beat and afflicted him in this lower mortal state. This is the God that declares himself to be, in this wicked, sin-smitten, ruined world, the God of all comfort, the great-breasted God, the great mother-God, into whose arms come those that weep, where He comforts them, even as a mother comforts her child. And the earth itself is rocked, as it were, by that same tending, nursing, loving God, if only its inhabitants knew what is the consolation that is addressed to them."

Some of the old divines, and nearly all the schoolmen tell us that God is incapable of emotion or feeling. They represent Him as sitting upon His lofty throne, cold, indifferent, immobile, and "impassive as the marble in the quarry." Feeling, they say, would imply passivity, or susceptibility of impression from without, which, they argue, is utterly

incompatible with the nature of God. This conception of the Divine Being may be philosophically consistent ; but it is not a view that commends itself to the heart of man. To believe that God is not, and cannot be, the subject of passivity in any form is to be guilty of supreme blasphemy. If He sits on high, devoid of sensibility, above and inaccessible to suffering, having no interest in His creatures whatever, incapable of sympathy and love, He is not God, but a monster, whom no man can yearn after or love. Mr. Beecher preaches a very different Deity from that He says : "I believe in the God of the New Testament, and in all the facts recorded therein concerning Him. I believe Him to be one who can smile, and weep, and joy, and suffer. I cannot conceive of a God that my heart would want, who could not share in my suffering, and participate in my joy. I cannot conceive how God can be a father and not have a heart-care of His creatures. Can you be a father or a mother and not have your feelings fluctuate with those of your children ? If God has a heart of stone, He can hold the universe in His bosom and not suffer ; but if He has a sympathetic and quick-feeling heart, the wants, and troubles, and weaknesses of mankind must touch His soul. The sympathies of God for man flow forth, not as tears flow from the eyes of mortals, but as the tides of the ocean sweep through the whole world."

It is held by some that Mr. Beecher gives undue prominence to the sympathy and compassion of God. They remind us that the Lord is just as well as loving and holy as well as merciful, and that we should be very cautious lest we exalt one attribute at the expense of ignoring or neglecting others. There is an element of truth in that observation which we would do well to lay seriously to heart. God is certainly no more loving than just. He cannot overstep the boundaries of the essential rectitude of His own nature. He must punish sin ; He must frown upon iniquity ; He must pronounce the sentence of utter condemnation upon every wilful sinner ; He cannot extinguish the fires of hell. Justice is thus an essential, eternal, inexorable attribute of the Divine character. Nevertheless, it is quite possible to put inordinate emphasis upon it in our

representations of the Divine Being. Certainly we are not to conceive of it as doing police-work among the attributes, or as being constantly on the watch lest the Almighty be induced to violate His own law. There are some who speak of God as if His heart were the scene of a fearful conflict between law and gospel, between justice and love. They represent Him as bearing on one side of His character thunder and lightning, fire and brimstone, death and hell; and on the other, mercy and peace, pardon and life, heaven and happiness. But such a representation is a horrible, inexcusable travesty of the Divine character. In God's heart there has never been the shadow of a discord. From all eternity His glorious attributes have dwelt together in supreme peace and harmony. But love is more than an attribute, in that it lies at the very root and base of the Divine nature. "God is love." He is not simply loving in the same sense that He is just, but His very essence, the very centre of His being, is love itself. In the early Church, theologians maintained that the essence of Deity is an unfathomable mystery; and some of them went so far as to argue that He is above essence, and without essence. The Bible shatters that philosophy at one blow by the simple statement, "God is love." And this love includes all the attributes, because it is pure, perfect love. It carries in itself the severest of all punishment for every form of impurity and sin. The wrath of love is terrible beyond description. But its characteristic feature is disinterested, boundless benevolence. Its nature is to sacrifice itself, and suffer in behalf of others. To this conception of the Deity Mr. Beecher clings with the most rapturous attachment. He is never so eloquent and powerful as when expounding and illustrating the transcendent motherhood of the Divine Being—His long-suffering, His patience, His infinite pity, the fulness of His compassion. Here is a beautiful passage:—

"God never reveals Himself to us as a distant, glimmering light. Of all stars, He calls Himself the bright and morning star—the star that lingers longest in the sky, and shines and glorifies, *an avant courier* of the sun, as John the Baptist did in the rising splendour of Christ. Many people get a

wrong idea of God by thinking of Him as infinite only in justice and power; but infinite applies to the feelings of God as much as to the stretch of His right hand. There is nothing in His nature which is not measureless. Many think God sits brooding in heaven as storms brood in summer skies, full of bolts and rain, and believe that they must come to Him under the covert of some apology, or beneath some umbrellaed excuse, lest the clouds should break and the tempest overwhelm them. But when men repent towards God, they go not to storms, but to serene and tranquil skies, and to a Father who waits to receive them with all tenderness, and delicacy, and love. His eye is not dark with vengeance, nor His heart turbulent with wrath; and to repent towards His justice and vindictiveness must always be from a lower motive than to repent towards His generosity and love."

It is evident, from the above quotations, that Mr. Beecher is not in the habit of embellishing his discourses with horrid, frightful, and shocking pictures of the dark and austere side of the Divine character. Cheerful, radiant, brimful of hope and courage himself, he is anxious to develop the same characteristics in those who listen to him. The thunders of the law, and the lightnings of justice, have no fascination for him. His gospel teems with the glad tidings of salvation. If at times he finds it necessary to introduce the terrors of a guilty conscience and a broken law, he so introduces them that they stand not in the forefront, but in the background of his pictures. The foreground of all his pictures is devoted to the bright, the hope-inspiring and the loving. Glancing over several thousands of his published sermons, we fail to come across one that indicates the least desire on the part of the preacher to terrify men with ghastly representations of the Divine wrath and vengeance. President Edwards preached continually on the most terrific and blanching subjects in existence, such as "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," "The Future Punishment of the Wicked unavoidable and intolerable," "The Eternity of Hell Torments," "The Torments of the Wicked in Hell no occasion of grief to the Saints in Heaven," "Wicked Men useful in their Destruc-

tion only," "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Mr. Beecher, on the contrary, deals with another class of truths altogether, such as "The Love of God," "The Gentleness of God," "The Fatherhood of God," "The Sympathy of Christ," "The Long-suffering of God," "The Patience of God," "The God of Comfort," "The Divine Pity." We have never seen a sermon by him on the wrath of God. Not that he does not utter solemn warnings in the ears of careless sinners, or that he does not threaten the guilty with the thunderbolts of an outraged Deity, but that he is careful not to give undue prominence to these things, which form, as it were, the background of the gospel. Indeed, some of his sentences and paragraphs are as stern, and rigid, and searching, and conscience-awakening, as anything we have ever seen in the works of Edwards; but such sentences and paragraphs are never, in his case, allowed to form the major part of even a single sermon, and they are, for that very reason, all the more telling and fruitful of good. His God is a God of love and pity, and his ministry is characterised by its joyfulness, and its encouraging, inspiring tone.

2. We pass on to the subject of *Anthropology*. In this region Mr. Beecher is more or less at variance with the great bulk of Christian teachers in every age of the Church. Though his views on this subject are by no means original, yet the frequency, the fervent eloquence, and the burning zeal with which he utters them, have caused them to exert a mighty influence over the Church of to-day. Inasmuch as this subject embraces a great quantity of minor topics, it will be more convenient, perhaps, to consider these one by one in their natural order.

The first topic that presents itself is the introduction of the human family into the world. As we all know, orthodox divines invariably teach that man was created in a state of maturity and perfection—that he had no infancy of any kind, but came from the hands of the Almighty a well-balanced, full-grown, ripe human being, the proud possessor of a group of faculties, every one of which performed its functional duties with as much efficiency as if it had gone through a thousand years of training and development. This is the only doctrine which has enjoyed the sanction of

the Church. Adam was a great giant, strong in body, strong in mind ; he stood on a high pinnacle of boundless bliss. Thus, on the very day of his birth into conscious existence, he had good command of language, a large measure of intelligence, a fair knowledge of the nature of his surroundings, and a wonderful degree of manly independence. He represented humanity at its best. Furthermore, it is maintained by orthodoxy that he was endowed with a perfect moral character. By this is meant, not only that all the powers of his soul were in a state of perfect equilibrium and due subordination—the reason subject to the laws of heaven, the will doing all the behests of the reason, the affections and appetites rendering glad obedience to the will, and the body a ready and efficient organ of the mind ; but also, and chiefly, that he possessed knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. Instead of being commissioned to form a character for himself by a wise and natural exercise of his faculties, he was blessed with a holy character at his creation, before he had performed a single holy act. All his dispositions and affections were so pure and divine that it was impossible for him to commit sin ; nor did he commit sin until a special temptation was placed before him for the purpose of trying him.

But Mr. Beecher controverts and blankly denies this doctrine, and sometimes goes so far as to ridicule it. His statements are very explicit :—“It is plain, I think, from historical facts, and from principles as we deduce them, that the human race was, from the beginning, and is still, an unfolding race, and that the system of the world is adapted to secure happiness, not as an end, but simply as a means of development ; and that both pleasure and pain are instrumental to the final development of human nature to its very highest plane and condition.

“Now, we have read in book and catechism, and we have heard told in sermon and essay, that the race was created upright. The race was never created upright. There never was such a gigantic lie told since the world was created, if you admit the historic verity of Adam and Eve—which I do not ; if you admit that this was other than a parable—which I do not. The stiffer catechism tells you that though

men were created upright, they fell from their first estate; that their whole posterity fell with them, and that they made a very thorough business of falling all around. The human race, even according to the most stringent catechism, did not begin at a perfect state; they began at a fallen one. I hold that the race fell when they were born. I do not believe that the world has been other than what God meant that it should be."

It has been alleged that, in his exposition of the original state of man, Mr. Beecher totally ignores all reference to the Word of God, and that, in overt opposition both to the plain teaching of Holy Writ and the sanctioned doctrine of the Church, he places his own philosophy and personal conviction. But the allegation is utterly false, having its only foundation in the exuberant imagination of those who make it. Mr. Beecher regards the account of man's creation and fall in Genesis as a sacred poem or sublime parable, and that we are to interpret it according to the canons of interpretation which usually obtain in the realm of poetry and parables. Nor is he alone in this position. Even Coleridge, whose orthodoxy is acknowledged by all, advocates the same view, and assures us that "divines of the most unimpeachable orthodoxy and the most averse to the allegorising of Scripture history in general, have, from the earliest ages of the Christian Church, adopted or permitted it in this instance." Moreover, he makes the bold assertion that "it does not appear that the Church of England demands the literal understanding of the document contained in the second (from verse eight) and third chapters of Genesis as a point of faith, or regards a different interpretation as affecting the orthodoxy of the interpreter."—(*"Aids to Reflection,"* p. 267.)

Referring to the views usually held on this point, Mr. Beecher says:—"In the days when, as yet, the light of the decrees of God was not revealed, before men had come to any knowledge of God as in the whole creation around about us and in us—in the childhood, in other words, of thought on the subject—it may not be strange that men held such views; but that they should go on holding them now, in the manhood of human reasoning, is most pitiful and confounding.

If there be one thing that is apparent to me, it is that in the creation of this world the Divine conception was to create a race that was not perfect—that was as far back from perfection as the babe when it is born is from perfect manhood ; and that in every family we have again the epitome of history. In every child that is born we have repeated in small the lessons and the facts that have taken place cosmically upon the whole globe.” Then he proceeds to set before us his own view in the following language :—“The beginning is the very lowest state. It is absolute weakness. It is nothingness organised with potentiality—with powers that are to develop by and by, through days, through weeks, through months, through years, by stages, and under experiences. Laws in heaven, laws on earth, laws in the parent, laws in the body, and laws in the soul, are God’s ministers to carry men up from infancy to manhood—to carry the race up from its infancy to its manhood.

“Then, if we admit that the fundamental conception of the Divine Creator was a perfect race in perfect conditions on the globe, I am sure you must have a very low conception of God to suppose that he could not compass it. If God could create butterflies, so beautiful and so useless, to fly through their little month, which is their eternity, with nothing to do but suck honey from beautiful flowers, and show their exquisite hues, then, if He meant men to be such things as these, flying through the air, and drinking honey from flowers, I am sure He could have made them so ; and I do not think there was any power in the universe that could have prevented His doing it ; and there are men whose conception of God is so very low that they think He did make them so. He did not make them so or anything like it. He made the fishes so, He made the insects so, He made the reptiles so, and made the birds so ; but it stops when you begin to go upward. As you rise, the circuit of life is larger, and its term is longer and longer, until you strike the human plane ; and there it takes the greatest time for creatures to ripen. There come more care and liabilities to suffering. In the unfolding series, pain increases in the degree in which being increases, and is working in the line of development toward higher being—toward greater exaltation.”

But are we to infer from the foregoing quotations that Mr. Beecher denies the fall altogether? Yes, and no. Yes, if by the fall is meant that in consequence of one act of disobedience to the laws of heaven, man became thoroughly corrupt and degraded in every single faculty of his nature. No, if by the fall is meant that immediately after their creation mankind began to transgress and trample under foot the sacred laws and principles planted in their own constitution. The technical, scientific, and metaphysical fall of theology he rejects with contempt, believing it to be a monstrous doctrine; but he finds himself compelled to admit that men round about him in society are sinful—leading lives of selfishness, degradation, and woe. But we will let him speak for himself:—

“You understand what I mean when I speak of the *depravity* of man. There has been so much mistake, and so much controversy about it, that I seldom use that term. Not that I do not believe that to be true which wise men have thought who have hitherto used it; but I think it to be infelicitous, and therefore choose to speak of men’s *sinfulness* rather than their depravity. I am inclined to let the old war terms die out, and take the new and better ones.

“What, then, is a man’s depravity? When you say that an army is destroyed, what do you mean? Not that everybody in it is killed; but that, as an army, its complex organisation is broken up and scattered. When I say that an organ is utterly spoiled, what do I mean? What would spoil an orchestra? Cutting off every man’s head, or smashing every one of the instruments? Yes, that would do it. But it can be done a great deal easier than that. Put every single instrument at discord with its fellows, and is not the orchestra spoiled as effectually as it can be? What spoils a watch? Do you need to put it on a stone and grind it to powder, in order to spoil it? Take out the mainspring. ‘Well,’ says a man, ‘the mainspring is gone, to be sure; but it is not all spoiled. It is good as far as it goes, is it not.’ How far does a watch go that has no mainspring? ‘Well, the pointers are not useless.’ Perhaps not for another watch; but what are they good for in a watch that has no mainspring? ‘There are a great many wheels inside

that are not injured.' Yes, but what are wheels worth in a watch that has no mainspring? A watch is an organised thing, which requires for its value that every part should be in perfect harmony with every other part. If anything happens to it which prevents all the parts working together harmoniously, it is spoiled. What spoils a compass? Anything which unfits it for doing what it was intended to do. Do you say, 'It is good to make some other useful thing of?' That may be; but is it good for anything as a compass?

"Now, here is this complex organisation, the body, with its various appetites. This body has grafted upon it the bud and blossom of the social affections. Still higher branches open out, of spiritual sentiments, that take hold of the invisible, the ineffable, and the divine. Here is reason. Here is faith acting through the imagination. And these royalties of the soul are all mixed up. Where conscience ought to be, is pride. Where love ought to be, is selfishness. Where there ought to be the sweet blossoms of the higher sentiments, there are the gnawing insects and coiling serpents of the passions. And the soul is all stirred up; its sympathy and harmony are gone. And is it not ruined? It is not necessary that a man should be all bad to be ruined. No man is bad in everything. Thank God, all men are restrained in various ways, and every man has some virtues and excellencies. There are few men who have not some truth, some love, and certain elements of faith. But how many men are there who have a harmonious inward being? A man's moral sentiments ought to be strongest and highest; his social affections ought to be intermediate; and his animal passions ought to be subordinate and entirely obedient. If they are so, he has a beautifully organised and harmonious being. But how few there are that come anywhere near these conditions of organisation?

"Man is depraved; he has lost that harmony which belongs to a perfect organisation. And so he lives to struggle; and the struggle through which he is passing is the cause of human woe and sorrow. It is that which has drenched this world in tears, and rolled it in blood, and darkened the heavens, and made the history of the past hideous, and the prospects of the future gloomy."

He often tells us, however, that he does not believe in the doctrine of *total* depravity. He once said: "I would not, for all the world, make my nest in the doctrine of total depravity. It would be like lying on a bed of thorns." But who is there that would like to do such a thing? It is not a doctrine to make one's nest in, though some find no alternative but to believe it; and Mr. Beecher himself, however much he may deride the theory or theories of total depravity, believes the doctrine as a *fact*. In a lecture, entitled, "Sins and Sinfulness," he makes the following comprehensive and satisfactory statement:—

"I suppose I have as deep a personal consciousness, and as strong and abiding a sense of the sinfulness of the race, and of the indispensable need of Divine interposition in behalf of men on account of sin, as any man with my faculties could have; and, therefore, in the course of my statements, I must not be understood either as lowering the importance, or as in any way doing away with the fact of that doctrine which underlies theology. For, although the grand architectural facts of scientific theology are the existence, the will, and the government of God, yet the fundamental fact is the sinfulness of man. That fact is to theology what disease is to medicine. Unless there were diseases, there could be no science of medicine. There might be a science of hygiene, but there could be none of remedy; and unless there were sinfulness in man, there could be no doctrine of repentance, of new birth, of atonement, or of Divine inspiration and recuperative power; in short, almost nothing would be left."

He disposes of the vexed problem as to the origin of evil with wonderful ease, declaring that we know just as much about it as our fathers did, and not a bit more; that they knew just as much about it as we do, and not a bit more; and that neither did they, nor do we, know anything about it. That, surely, is a most summary way of getting over a grave difficulty. Myriads upon myriads of bulky volumes have been thrown upon the world from the beginning till now, and every one of them professes to solve the mystery to the entire satisfaction of every intelligent and reasonable man; but how much wiser in regard to the matter are we than were

our antediluvian fathers? Is it now less a mystery than it was then? But Mr. Beecher uses the term evil in more senses than one, which has given rise in certain quarters to a serious misapprehension as to his real belief on this point. In the first place, he employs the word evil to signify sin, guilt, transgression, iniquity, corruption. In this sense we cannot account for its origin, nor can we say anything at all about it, other than that its author is man—not God. In the second place, he frequently uses the word to denote suffering or pain, which forms so large a factor in the history of mankind, and which has always seemed to be an insoluble problem. More numerous are the theories invented by human ingenuity and philosophy, to account for the existence of evil in this sense, than the sands on the seashore, and than the stars in the firmament of heaven! Hitherto the prevailing opinion has been that suffering of every kind originates in sin, and that they who suffer most are the greatest sinners. But this doctrine militates against the teaching of actual facts. Why, then, is there so much pain in the universe? Why are all the wombs of time so busily generating it? Wherefore all those groans, and sighs, and pangs? Is there no explanation of the mystery anywhere? Must we for ever listen to the wrangling disputations of ignorant men, and be no wiser in the end than at the beginning? On this momentous question Mr. Beecher reasons as follows:—

“This has been the cob which men have been gnawing for a thousand years; but no one ever got a kernel from it. It was a cob when they began gnawing it, and it is a cob yet. The origin of evil? The very system of creation originated evil. God chose such a state of things as exist; and having chosen it, evil was organic, created, universal, characteristic, designed. It did not come in by accident; it was put in on purpose.

“In the crop of a hen—or in the gizzard, as they call it—you will find a little handful of gravel. It is not there by accident; it was put there to grind up the grain, the food; and it was undoubtedly made to act as a little mill. We grind our food in one way; the hen grinds hers in another; and in both cases the grinding is designed. The human

race were created with grinding material—a good deal of emery, a good deal of gravel, a good deal of hard soil, a good deal of bitter suffering, a good deal of fear, a good deal of anxiety, a good deal of burdensomeness; ten thousand influences; and man's business is to get out from under them. Otherwise he would be as lazy as a poplar tree. He is to get something good out of them. Otherwise he would be inactive. A man finds himself at every step plied, plied, plied, except under those open skies that breed eternal laziness. In northern climates, and in temperate zones, manhood comes constantly by the stroke of suffering, or, as men call it, of evil.

“Now, this suffering, this evil, in the world did not surprise God. He is not surprised at His own designs, nor at the execution of them. Evil did not come from any malign spirit that crept in while the Father slept. It did not suspend, it did not interrupt, any design of God. The idea that it did is puerile; and while it may be suitable to the childhood of humanity, in the twilight of human reason, it is unacceptable to its later stages. The whole world, and the very marrow of things, show that pain and suffering belong to creation, that they were allied with it on purpose, and that they will go on until the race is by them so far lifted up into perfection that it will be affected by influences acting from the other side.

“Did God make laws to have them broken? In one sense, no; but in another sense, yes. Yes, when He put nascent, germinating creatures under them; for He knew perfectly well that they would break those laws. Every step upward was a step that had to be accomplished by endeavour.

“You set a copy for your boy to write in school; a beautiful copy it is; but you know perfectly well that he will make sprawling letters, and mar every single line. Did you set that copy to have that child make such sprawling letters? Did not you know he would make them? Certainly you did. You set the copy that he might find his way up to it by long-continued effort.

“When God made laws He knew perfectly well that they were beyond the reach of men; and He knew perfectly

well that men would make blunders in trying to obey them. He made them with the expectation that men would fail in their tentative struggles to fulfil them. Their endeavours at fulfilment were steps toward fulfilment. In other words, the process was an educating one. And here I disdain, and cast under foot with infinite contempt, the idea that God has that conception of law which a tyrant has on earth, who says, 'Do this; and one single variation from this will be your destruction'—the despotic, the tyrannic idea. I would have you put in the place of that, 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.' 'Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' That He knows our infirmities is the impulsion which comes to the creature who is struggling to fulfil a not-well-understood law, and whose face is set as if he would go up to Jerusalem, but who slips on the path.

"The conception of God, and His law and His government, as the outspring of love, is perfectly in harmony with the facts as they exist; but the legal idea which has come down in theology, and which we borrowed so largely from the Roman code, is unscriptural. When men were made, in the great system of creation, God knew perfectly well that there would be infinite failures all the way through, simply because they were ascending from the less to the greater, from the lower to the higher, from the immature to the ripe."

But at this stage a question of the utmost importance confronts us, demanding a definite and explicit answer, namely:—If mankind have not had a fall in the old orthodox sense, if all the arrangements of Divine Providence are adapted to effectuate their spiritual education and upbuilding, if suffering and pain and sorrow are ministers of God to redeem, and sanctify, and exalt them, is it necessary to insist upon the new birth as the condition of inheriting eternal life? Is not the doctrine of regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost to be cast aside as a worn-out, preposterous dogma of narrow-minded and bigoted divines? On this point Mr. Beecher has been sadly misunderstood, and, it is

to be feared, maliciously misrepresented. There are many people who assert, unblushingly, that he holds the doctrine of the new birth in derision, and regards the existing provisions of Providence as sufficient to ensure the final salvation of all men. Such an assertion is an unmitigated falsehood. If he is lax and latitudinarian on some points, he is perfectly sound on this. Most earnestly does he believe that without the grace of God in Christ no man living can be saved, and with the greatest possible fervour does he invite men to Jesus, as the only Deliverer. How he deplores the condition of those who dream in their pride that they need not the Saviour, and how persistently and faithfully he pleads with them! Here is an instance, taken from a sermon preached ten years ago: "There are men whose natural tendency leads them to an overweening estimate of themselves. There are men who have a sense of superior and sometimes of supreme excellence. All the preaching in the world seems only to make them pity other folks. There are men who sit quiescent, and pleased and smiling to hear the denunciations of the law, and who think as they listen, 'These sinners are being faithfully dealt with.' Men there are who, when the truth is brought home to them, and even for the moment pierces the covering of their intense self-esteem, feel, 'It is probably in the way of professional duty that the minister does it; he thinks that he ought to do it; and as I am a reputable man in the congregation, I ought not to take offence. He says these things to me, because he has to say them to me in order to say them to other people. I simply take my share for the benefit of other folks.' Are there not men that sit in this congregation who have had this insane vanity, this inordinate conceit, which seems to have been wrought into the very fibre of their being? They look upon all arguments and appeals with a kind of speculative interest; but it never reaches to the core of matters, and never brings them down on their knees before God, and causes them to say, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' They have been lifted up by joy, they have been melted by pity, have been pleased and instructed by arguments, they have known various experiences, they have had various emotions in their soul; but none of these things have led

them to feel, 'I am, from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, sinful ; I am bruised and sick ; I am needy ; my case is desperate ; and nothing can help me out of my trouble but the infinite love and sovereign power of God.' That impression they never had in their life. And yet, these are men whose shoes are never soiled, and whose hands are never uncleanly. They are men who wipe their lips ; who boast of their civility ; who stand high ; who are excellent men for the uses of this life. But oh ! for the other life ! For we are to this life what the seed-corn is to next summer. Corn that may be very good for horses' food to-day may not be good to sprout and come up and make new corn for the summer that is following. And the character that may be good for society purposes here, may not have in it that element which shall carry a man into the grave, and through the grave, and into the presence of God, and make him a fit companion for God's angels in the heavenly land. And though I would not charge you who have an overweening, inordinate estimation of your own excellence and your own safety therein ; though I would not charge you with drunkenness, nor with lechery, nor with fraud, nor with lying ; though I would say that you are better in many respects than persons who are guilty of these great vices and crimes—yet, so far as the uncovering of the soul before God and God's Spirit is concerned, the publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before you. They believe that they are sinners ; they know it ; and by-and-by there may come an hour in which they will cry out in anguish and despair, 'God save me !' But you do not believe that you are a sinner. You have never known the time when you had a consciousness of the want of Divine help ; you have never known the moment when you lifted up hands strained with desire, and said, 'O God ! change this heart of mine !' And your pride will be your destruction."

Here is another passage in which he proclaims the graciousness of God as exhibited in the conversion of great sinners : "Sometimes men complain of the doctrine of a regenerated life, as if it were a requisition ; it is not—it is a refuge. Oh ! what would not a criminal, who at thirty-five years of age found himself stung with disgrace, and over-

whelmed with odium, give, if in the policy of human society there should be any method by which he could begin back again, as if he had not begun at all, and with all his accumulated experience build his character anew! But in the economy of God in Christianity there is such a thing as a man at fifty or sixty years of age—hoary-headed in transgression, deeply defiled, struck through and through with the fast colours of depravity—having a chance to become a true child again. God sets a partition wall between him and past transgressions, and says, ‘I will remember them no more for ever.’”

There is nothing ambiguous, indeterminate, doubtful, or “lax” in that language. He who could speak in such a strain, and with such intense earnestness, must be a believer in the doctrine of regeneration. Mr. Beecher *does* believe in it with all his heart. With the most emphatic distinctness and simplicity he says: “From the lowest depth of the greatest animalism to the twilight line, above the point of refinements and moralities and specious beauty, every man is to pass. He must make a transition from that state in which his life is bent supremely on self, to that state in which his life is bent on holy things. The impulses of this life must be changed. *Every man must undergo a change before he can pass into the great things of the salvable ones. He must be born again.*” And again: “*Ye must be born again.*” It seems to me that if you but knew what that upper life is, what it works toward, what its joys are, how sweet it is here and all the way up, and especially beyond, it would not be needful for me to say, ‘Ye must be born again.’ You, with uplifted hands and clamorous lips, would say, ‘May we not be born again; may we not be crowned.’” Is not this the new birth taught by John Calvin, Martin Luther, George Whitfield, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Dr. John Owen, and the great host of evangelical divines in all ages, both in the Protestant and Catholic branches of the Church? Is not this the new birth insisted upon with such glowing earnestness and solemn emphasis by Jesus Christ himself, and which the Apostles preached with such eminent success in Asia and Europe? But is this grand old truth to be pronounced heterodox when proclaimed with unusual

eloquence and spiritual power by Henry Ward Beecher? Rather, is not its unswerving adherence to this fundamental dogma of the Christian religion that has caused the name of Plymouth Church to become a household word throughout Christendom?

But some sceptical readers whisper to one another: "Yes, he may have believed and preached that glorious doctrine during his early ministry in the west, and for a few years, perhaps, after he came to Brooklyn, but for many years now he has renounced it and gone over to the Free-thinkers." That whisper, however, is founded on no substantial evidence, for the only reliable testimony in our possession goes to disprove it. In a letter written in 1877, he declares that his "working sympathies go with the evangelical orthodox ministry;" and, furthermore, that he still preaches "the doctrine of a change of heart, and of the efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit in regeneration." And again, in a sermon preached on Sunday morning, 11th July 1880, he says: "I believe that God exerts an influence upon the human soul, by which it is softened, enlightened, and made willing to all good and averse to all evil; and that men are called in sacred Scripture, and equally by their reason and moral sense, to seek this renovation and inspiration, by which their whole nature comes under Divine influence, and is changed gradually from sin to perfect holiness."

What has led many people to doubt his orthodoxy in this matter is, perhaps, the goodhumoured way in which he treats certain stereotyped notions respecting the nature and mode of conversion. He has no sympathy whatever with superstitious people who imagine that the Almighty is tied down to one unchangeable mode of dealing with the human soul, and that, therefore, every person must be born again in exactly the same way. He believes that such a notion is pernicious beyond conception, and makes every effort within his power to uproot it from the Church. Here is an example of how he denounces it: "A man goes to the minister, and says, 'What must I do to secure eternal life?' 'You must repent,' says the minister. So the man cries, and cries, and cries, and feels bad, and feels bad, and feels bad. That is

the way he pays for his insurance. By-and-by he feels better, and asks the minister, 'Is that evidence that I have my policy?' 'Yes,' says the minister; 'you have had your bad state, and you have come to your joyful state, and now you have your hope.' And the man goes home, and says to his wife, 'My dear, I have passed from death to life, and, come what may, I am going to be saved. I may wander, to be sure; but I have my evidence, my hope, my insurance.'" Most incontrovertibly there is no denial of the evangelical doctrine of the new birth in that extract. The evident object of the passage is to expose one of the deadliest errors into which a man can fall. To substitute mere feeling for principle; to make the salvation of the soul dependent on copious weeping, and a subsequent sense of relief; to regard religion as a mawkish sentiment unproductive of any reformation in life and character—is not that a fatal, damning heresy, which every messenger of Jesus Christ ought to laugh to scorn? And yet, is a man to be accounted a heretic because he is bold enough to stand up against such a dangerous error? Does he, for that reason, deny "the majestic reality, the sublime truth, that a man must be born again?"

As the foregoing quotations amply show, the *peculiarity* of Mr. Beecher's anthropology consists in that he represents man, not simply as a sinful creature, but as one who, though sinful and corrupt, is yet redeemable. He dwells not upon the depravity of the human race, but rather upon the recuperative, saving, and sanctifying ministries which Jehovah has ordained for its education and upbuilding. He blows the trumpet of hope. The fact that the human soul is sin-sick, he takes for granted, and therefore he spends his whole time and energy in trying to convince it that it may be cured. He does not come to us exclaiming, "Oh, men! ye are lost, ye are lost, ye are lost," for that would be cruel mockery; but he comes to us proclaiming the great loving Gospel—"You *are* lost, that is evident, but Christ stands ready to save you; you *have* destroyed yourselves, but in God is your salvation."

3. We are now in a position to consider his views of the *Person of Christ*. This is undoubtedly the most important

and vital topic in the whole range of theology. Our conception of the Atonement depends to a very great extent upon our conception of the Person of Jesus Christ. As Mr. Beecher says, "What Christ said, and what He did, are profoundly important, but what He *was* is transcendently more important." It is utterly impossible to judge accurately of His works and sayings until we have decided who and what He was. Mr. Beecher firmly believes that He was the only-begotten Son of God. He says: "You must notice that Jesus, as He came to this world—born of a woman, being successively a babe, a young man, a working man, a toiler among the poor citizens, Himself a citizen, subject to all the experiences that belong to what may be called His strictly secular and early life—from our first knowledge of Him as a thinker or an actor, manifested the Divine consciousness. That is to say, it was very plain that He himself stood in the conditions of this life as one who remembered a former existence—as one who knew Himself to be higher than kings and greater than lords; yea, that without the slightest apology, or any sense of incongruity, He did not hesitate to take a higher place than the prophets, than the law, than the altar, than the temple, than the whole Jewish economy; and not only this, but that, though in time-relations He spoke of himself as subordinate to the Father, yet in eternal-relations He spoke of himself as equal to the Father, and as his companion. He never, in a single instance, showed a consciousness of limitation, or of imperfection, or of infirmity, or of sin; He never uttered a conviction which indicated that He recognised anything less than absolute holiness in Himself; He always carried Himself with an easy and gentle grace, in the consciousness of His perfection, which we had almost said came from life-long breeding, but which was innate, inborn, with Him."

H. R. Haweis, in a most excellent and appreciative article which appeared in the "Contemporary Review," asserts that Mr. Beecher nowhere explains in what sense Jesus Christ is God; but that assertion is completely disproved by the above extract. Is not the statement that in the relations of eternity the Saviour spoke of Himself as being equal with the Father as satisfactory an explanation of His divinity as

can be given? Mr. Haweis seems to think that his views on this point are so loose and indefinite that one would be almost justified in classing him with Unitarians. But will the Unitarians admit that it was the Son of the Virgin who created the world and all it contains? Will the Unitarians subscribe to the belief that "all the powers and attributes of Divinity are ascribed to Christ by the Bible, and that if any of the relations of man to God, either of love or of worship, would be idolatry if attached to Christ, then the New Testament is the most ingeniously false and dangerous book in existence?" Do the Unitarians hold that, "so far as it is essential for us to know, Christ is God?" Surely it cannot be that when he wrote his article, Mr. Haweis had read Mr. Beecher's sermon, entitled, "The Divinity of Christ Maintained," which was preached in Plymouth Church in 1860, and which was afterward entirely re-written by himself, and appeared in a volume of his sermons, published at his own request, in 1868. In that sermon he bases an argument for the Divinity of our Saviour upon his relations, now and hereafter, to the human soul. He asks: "May the soul yield itself without reserve to the guidance of Christ? May it bestow upon Him its affection without measure? May its love kindle the imagination till His pictured greatness and excellence draw forth a profound reverence and a rapturous homage? May man call upon his soul, and all that is within him, to laud and magnify the name of Christ, until it is set above every other name, and not *below* the very name of God?" All these questions are answered in the affirmative. Christ did not invite men to the Father, but to Himself, to his own Personality. "While Christ excelled all teachers in the breadth and richness of His moral instruction, the most striking difference between Him and all other teachers was the *personal allegiance* which He demanded to Himself. He urged Himself upon men as the embodiment of truth, and demanded of His followers not simply an assent to His doctrines, but the interweaving of their lives with His. Plato and Socrates have been often mentioned as the greatest teachers of men. Imagine Socrates standing in Athens, even when men were most affected by him, and amid influences the most propitious, saying to his

followers, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me : for I am weak and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Or imagine Plato, when in some favoured day he had carried up his disciples with great enthusiasm by his discourse, saying, 'I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' These are not sentences flashing from the extreme excitement of some rapturous moment; they are specimens of Christ's manner; they run through all His discourses. As His end drew nigh, and the minds of His disciples were more open, the frequency and boldness with which He presented Himself as the epitome of truth; as the source of spiritual life in heaven; as the object of supreme trust; as the only authentic conception of God; as the exclusive way and door, must have struck every attentive reader." Again: "If we examine the aspect in which this Person is represented, the claims which He makes, the natural effects which must inevitably flow from the performance of what He commands, it will become plain that, if it be wrong to worship Christ, the whole Gospel scheme is exquisitely adapted to mislead every susceptible and worshipping nature, and to entrap them into idolatry." Once again: "*And they worshipped Him*, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.' Did they sin in *worshipping* the Lord Jesus Christ? After their long career of intimacy, did love to such a Being, who had exhausted the symbolism of life to express His life-giving relations to them, with every conceivable incitement to reverence and worship; with love, wonder, joy, and gratitude kindling their imaginations towards Him; without a solitary word of caution, lest they be snared by their enthusiasm, and bestow upon Him the worship which belonged only to God—did they sin in worshipping Christ? If they did, was not Christ Himself the tempter? If they did not, may not every loving soul worship Him? Is there any other question of Divinity that man need be troubled about but a Divinity which the soul may worship?"

It is true that Mr. Beecher, while speaking of the Divinity of our Lord, is very fond of falling back upon the Bible; but his sermon on the subject is crowded with the

closest, most convincing reasoning. Taking the four Gospels as correct reports of the words and works of Christ, his argument is that faith in Christianity implies and means faith in the Divinity of Christ. His arguments on this point are overwhelmingly conclusive, and as fine and sparkling as any found in the wonderful discourses of F. W. Robertson, to whom Mr. Haweis so frequently refers. And Mr. Haweis is positively mistaken when he asserts that Mr. Beecher does not give us "any such subtle and luminous hypothesis as that there was from eternity something in the Creator which had sympathy with what we call human nature—that this humanity of God came forth in Jesus Christ." Is it not that very "hypothesis" which forms the backbone of his whole theology? That conception is the marrow of his teaching. According to his belief, Jesus of Nazareth was God made manifest in the flesh. He tells us that the profound infinite sympathy for sinners which Christ exhibited, dwells for ever, and unwasted, in the Divine heart. The Logos—the Word—became incarnate, not for the purpose of bringing into being any new principle or attribute, but simply to reveal, to make known what was in existence from all eternity. So strong is Mr. Beecher on this point that he is led to adopt Apollinarianism. Orthodoxy has always taught that Jesus Christ was both God and man, that He had a true body and a rational soul, which means that He had two consciousnesses—one infinite and the other finite, and two distinct souls, one Divine and the other human. But Mr. Beecher maintains that He did not assume a human soul, but simply a human body, and that the Divinity supplied the place of the human intelligence. The grand object of this incarnation was, that the Divine nature—the helpfulness, the vicariousness, the redemptive desire of God—might be disclosed and made known to the children of men. For the sake of preserving intact the Divinity of Jesus, Mr. Beecher is willing to sacrifice His humanity. However erroneous this view may be, there is something transcendently beautiful in it. It regards the marvellous life of the Son of Mary as a leaf from the eternal life of the Deity. What Jesus Christ felt and did, that the Almighty feels and does, on a larger scale, at all times.

Leaving the region of controversy, how beautiful and pathetic is the following pious tribute: "Oh Lord Jesus! my heart cries out from its depths that Thou art very God. In Thee I find rest and satisfaction. Thy heart opens like summer to one who navigates from high northern latitudes, and takes me into its tropical embrace. All thoughts and feelings that rise, singing in my soul, fly home to Thee, as birds to their nests. And Thy stores are infinite! When the mother tires of the child, and puts it away from the bosom where it draws its sweet life; when the friend who has yearned for love, says to the loving one, 'Enough, I am sated;' when the soul that has known only dreary wastes of experience, having come at last to a realm of song and bloom, calls back the darkness and the desert; even then, O Lord, I shall not weary of Thee! But where in my heart is one drop of affection, I would increase it till it should be as the unmeasured ocean; where now I look at Thee with adoring eyes, I would multiply my glances till my face should glow as does the sky when night reveals the stars; I would dedicate myself to Thee—various, universal, total self to Thee—my King and my God!"

It is very gratifying to learn that Mr. Beecher is so thoroughly sound on such a fundamental doctrine. We may not be able to agree with him on many minor points, such as the relative value of exact, logical statements, the nature of our Lord's humanity, and the necessity of taking a firm and decided stand against all heresies, but in so far as the transcendent fact of our Lord's Divinity is concerned, all evangelical Christians will feel that they are heartily at one with him. Some of us may think that, in denying that Jesus Christ had a human soul—a complete humanity—he loses from his theology one of the most beautiful and comforting truths which the incarnation has brought to light; but it should be remembered, on the other hand, that the New Testament is absolutely silent on this question, while it contains some passages which *seem* to favour Mr. Beecher's views. Moreover, if his theory be the correct one, it may easily be shown that it is calculated to be a minister of more inspiration and sympathetic cheer than the other. Because the Apollinarian notion was condemned in the General

Council held in Constantinople A.D. 381, it does not necessarily follow that it was a radically erroneous notion. But whether the theory is correct or not, it is evident that a man may hold it, and yet be perfectly orthodox on the general doctrine of our Lord's Divinity.

4. We are ready now to examine Mr. Beecher's views of the *Atonement*. In order to appreciate the position he has taken in reference to this essential question, it is necessary to bear in mind that the mission of the Messiah has always been the bone of contention among the scientific theologians. The Valley of the Divine Humiliation has been the most famous battlefield in the world, and continues to be so to the present hour. The ground is ever red with the blood of the slain. Countless battles have been fought here, and no one can number the mighty men of war who have fallen from age to age. There is an element of tragedy in the thought that men are bold enough to fight over the grave of a Divine Being! And yet it could not have been otherwise, because the whole warfare has been, and is, in a good cause, and for noble purposes. But how numerable are the theories of the atonement that have sprung up in consequence of these theological contests! One theory, which came into existence at a very early date, and which was held in great favour by the fathers, represented the atonement as a ransom paid by Jesus Christ to Satan—"the prince of the power of the air." According to this ludicrous conception, the object of redemption was to deliver mankind from the power of Satan. This theory was held in three distinct forms, but in each form it regarded the human race as under the dominion of the old serpent—the devil—and the work of Christ as an arrangement for its release, which Satan accepted. The champion of this view was Irenæus, who lived in the third century. But Irenæus was soon followed by the Alexandrine divines, headed by Clement of Alexandria and Origen, whose chief delight it was to theorise and speculate and define in the domain of Soteriology. In the course of time, theory followed theory, systems generated systems, until finally the atonement in its spiritual reality was well-nigh lost sight of altogether. In our own day even, divines are as far from theoretic

harmony on this point as at any former period. We have the Governmental theory, the Calvinistic or Augustinian theory, the Arminian theory, the Mystical theory, the Moral theory, and many other theories too numerous to mention; and the advocates of each theory claim for it the supreme and exclusive sanction of the Word of God.

Now, in the midst of so many different and conflicting opinions about the atonement, it is quite natural to ask—Which opinion is the most correct? Mr. Beecher answers by saying that he does not know, or much care. He rejects and spurns every theory that has ever been advanced, and claims for himself, in his treatment of the subject, the most absolute liberty. But his faith in the atonement, as a grand reality in the spiritual realm, is as firm and secure as the everlasting rocks. His language is very strong and unambiguous: "Wherever there has been a potent Christianity, there has been throbbing in the bosom of it, as the secret of its power, this great truth—the suffering of God for the sins of men. Unquestionably a plain man, not versed in niceties and subtleties of ethics or theologies, taking the Bible, could come to no other conclusion than this—that there is such a thing as vicarious suffering in the government of God." Then, after quoting several verses, he says that no "plain man can avoid inferring from such declarations that Christ did suffer in the place of men and for men." It is perfectly clear, therefore, that Mr. Beecher both believes in and preaches the fact of the Divine atonement.

Finding the doctrine that Jesus Christ died for the salvation of sinners so clearly taught in the Bible, he makes this pertinent inquiry: "Is not the principle of substitution a fact in human economy? Is not the principle of vicarious atonement a part of the divinely-organised system of God in human experience? Is not the doctrine of imputation, whether of good or of ill, a true doctrine? Does it not exist outside of any declaration of God's Word?" Here is his own answer: "The social laws under which men live are full of substitution and imputation—that is, the transfer to one man of the benefits of the conduct of another. No man can substitute his own strength for another man's. I cannot take my strength and put it in the place of my

child's weakness. But, considering my child in the sphere of his whole life, I can inject upon his days, upon his weeks, upon his months, upon his years, my thought, my experience, my guidance, so that his life, and the results of his life, shall flow through himself from me—I substituting my mind-power for his mind-power. On this possibility is built the whole training of society. It is because man has the power to throw the action of his mind over upon another, that it is possible for children to be trained. It is not possible in the animal kingdom, except to a very limited extent, and, therefore, beasts and birds do not train their children, save in the rudimentary functions on which life depends—walking, and flying, and eating. There they drop them. No bird-mother sits and teaches the bird-child, pointing it to the follies of her childhood, and to the temptations it will be liable to. There is no Sunday-school in the trees, and no teaching in the herd and in the field. The mind of the animal kingdom is not yet developed so high that a creature belonging to that kingdom can transfer its action, with the consequences thereof, over upon another. But when we come into the human family, we find at once that we have come into a sphere where this is possible in the lowest ranges of the human mind—there it exists only in a rudimentary form; but as you go up, with augmented being, there is increasing evidence of the power of one man to act in the place of another and for another, and to confer upon him the fruit of his own right or wrong-doing. It lays the foundation of the great social law, by which we transfer the good or evil that we do to the third and the fourth generation—a sublime law on the one side, and a terrible law on the other; but on both sides illustrating the power of one mind to throw over upon another the fruits of its own action."

Having explained and illustrated the action of this grand law in the domestic and social life, he proceeds as follows: "All those efforts by which good men ameliorate the condition of the ignorant and the vicious include the great law of vicarious suffering. The efforts which men make to restrain the mischiefs of the ignorance and vice of their fellow-men imply a certain amount of assumption upon themselves of suffering for that ignorance and vice. If a

man would go down among the low and degraded he must bear and forbear, and suffer with and for them, until such time as by his superior wisdom he shall lead them out of their lowness and degradation into a better state. It is the law of doing good among the ignorant that you shall suffer for them. It is the very nature of ignorance to exact suffering from its benefactors. It is the law of doing good among the vicious that you shall suffer for them. It is the very nature of vice to draw down the bosom that would succour it, and pierce it with the spear and with the thorn. It is a part of the effort to renovate society that men must step between their fellow-men and those natural laws which they have violated. 'That cannot be done,' it is said. Cannot I interpose between the violation of the law of cleanliness and the full friction of the penalty? Is there no such thing as coming down into the purlieus of vice by those that are clean, and healthy, and wise, and stepping between men's ignorance and their multitudinous transgressions against natural law, and preventing plagues and desolating sickness, and wickedness and suffering? This law of suffering one for another is the law of the elevation of morals. It is the law by which men are redeemed from the full sweep of their own ignorance and transgression. Philanthropy interposes between ignorance and the effects of transgression committed through ignorance. Is not the physician, with his wisdom and with his skill, to step between the transgressor and the final fruit of transgression? Does he not often turn back death that is coming as an avenger? and does he not rescue the victim? To step between the transgressor and the violation of natural law, and avert or mitigate the penalty—this is a part of the economy of society itself. What are poorhouses but vicarious sufferings? You and I pay for poorhouses; who inhabits them? Now and then one that is worthy, and unfriended and desolate, is found in them; but, as a general fact, four-fifths of all the men that go to poorhouses go there on account of the violation of natural laws. Vice carries them there. They have swum there on the turbid stream of wickedness; and, when they are lodged there, they are clothed, and fed, and warmed, and doctored, and supported from your pocket and mine, who have not transgressed. The poorhouse is a form

of vicarious suffering for the whole community. We stand between men that have transgressed natural law and the full penalty of their transgression. What are hospitals but institutional vicariousnesses? Through their instrumentality we interpose between the violation and the penalty of law. What are asylums and refuge-houses but various organic forms of the principle of vicarious suffering which exists throughout society? These illustrate the fundamental fact that one can step in between an individual's wrong actions and the consequences of those wrong actions."

The chief beauty of this argument is that it is cumulative. It rises gradually, step by step, till it reaches the very summit of force and convincingness. "Substitution or vicariousness increases," Mr. Beecher maintains, "in the direction in which manhood augments. It is the least in those respects in which man is an animal, or is allied to the animal world; and it is the most in those respects in which man is a spiritual being, and allied to the infinite and immortal." It is in the family that this principle of substitution is seen in its most lovely forms. "Where friends and friendships meet, there the law, according to which one stands in the place of another, has full development; and a part of the intercourse of generous souls is the play and interplay of thoughts and feelings, in such a way that men are perpetually separated from their own troubles, and mischances, and misdeeds by the continual interposition of the *friendly office*, as it is called—that is to say, by the vital faculties of those round about them."

The argument is thus traced up to its highest point. The preacher gathers his illustrations from all departments and relationships of human life; and then, in a few paragraphs of great eloquence, he applies them to the elucidation of the statement of Scripture, that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." We must give the following extract:—"We are prepared, now, to accept the affirmation of Christ's suffering for sinners without curious reasoning. We are prepared to accept it against almost any amount of sophistry, however ingenious it may be. We find this law developed outside of the Bible. We are in such a state that if the Bible was to

be written so as to describe the Divine character and the moral government of God from the indications of nature, and men were to come and say, 'What must it teach?' everybody would say, 'It must teach the sinfulness of man.' The Bible does teach that. 'What else must it teach?' 'That man is unable, of his own strength, to restore himself from sin : that he has part, but not plenary, power to do this.' The Bible does teach that. 'What else must it teach?' 'That there is a Divine effluence, a spiritual quickening, which is brought to bear upon men.' The Bible does teach that. There are such things in life ; and a Bible that teaches life must teach such things ; and such things are taught in the Bible. By the Spirit of God we are born again ; but it must be borne in mind that our new birth is a part of that system by which one suffers for others. We see no good done in this world that somebody did not suffer. There can be no education of children without there is somebody to suffer for them. A child with no mother, or with no nurse, the mother having been taken away, or worse yet, with a mother or nurse that is heartless and inhuman, grows up so much less than a human being, as it lacks the training which its helplessness demands. And if a child is sweet and pure, and aspiring and noble, somebody must have practised self-denial, or suffered for it ; somebody must have thought for the sake of the child's good thinking ; somebody must have agonised to save the child from agony ; somebody's conscience must have been crucified that the child's conscience might be saved from the thorn. And wretched is the child that has had nobody to suffer for it, to think for it, to feel for it, to live for it—for substituted life is the law of the development of life. My soul is the yeast of my children's souls ; and I mix my being into theirs, and theirs are raised and brought to vitality by it. And if there is to be a Bible that is true to life, there must be somewhere in that Bible a recognition of the Christian principle of vicarious suffering—the suffering of one for another : for it is in nature, it is in the household, it is in the Church, and it is in the whole realm of benevolence outside of the Church : and when we find the Bible teaching it, everybody says—'It ought to teach it ; it is but the echo of fact.'

“If any one, with curious argument, says, ‘It is not becoming to the nature of God to teach that a just person should suffer for an unjust one,’ I say that it is an objection, not against the Bible, but against Christians. It is a law that is organic. Who will take the penalties of lying? Well, the men that lie take their instalment first; but the men that tell the truth take their instalment also. Who takes the penalties of injustice? Well, there is an instalment to the man who commits the injustice; but just men also take their instalment. If it be impugning the character of God to teach that there is a doctrine of substitution and vicariousness, by which the just suffer for the unjust, then it is a doctrine which strikes clear through outward creation. Who pay for vice? Not the vicious. The virtuous pay for it. Who pay the taxes of the community? The men whose vices are the leakages? This community is a vast hull, and at every seam there is a leaking, and leaking, and leaking. Whose work is it to caulk it up? Why, it is the industrious man that pays for the waste of the shiftless man, in the long-run. It is the vice of the community that is the tax-gatherer of the community. It is drinking, gambling, passion, appetite, debauchery, the infraction of social and Divine laws, that lays the hard hand of tyranny and exaction on the community; and, if it were not for good men, communities would break down under the vices and crimes of bad men. Good men are bones that hold up the rotten fabric of many and many a community. And do they not suffer? Bad men transgress, and they suffer for their transgression. And the state of society is maintained—all the privileges and immunities of citizenship are maintained—for bad men, because there are found so many good men that keep the community from collapse and corruption. And if you say that it is against the idea of Divine benevolence that God should let just men suffer for unjust men, then your idea of Divine benevolence is a false one. It is not in accordance with past reason, it is not in accordance with the facts of human life, it is not in accordance with your own ideas, for when you turn to civil government, when you look at the analogies of life, when you examine the processes of nature, when you call to mind your own feelings as a father,

and when you take lessons from the household—then your conception of a being that is true to the laws of the universe must recognise the principle of suffering one for another. What would you not do for a child ; how much would you not suffer ; how long would you not bear with him, if only through your instrumentality he might be saved ? Now, lift that sublime form of parental life, which is familiar to you, up into the sphere of the infinite ; crown it, and enthrone it, and call it God or Saviour, and how glorious it becomes ! Is it not adorable and praiseworthy when it rises to the proportions of Divinity, and becomes typical of the character of the Creator himself ?

“ We find new light thus thrown upon the whole subject of Divine existence. No longer do we confine the atonement to a single act, or to a limited period. We accept the life and death of Christ as an atonement, as a substituted suffering—the just for the unjust ; but we do not feel that He was a sufferer only when He was on earth, and that His suffering then was all the suffering that was needful to the salvation of the world. It was the nature of Christ to suffer for sinners. He was embodied in the physical form that we might judge of what that nature was in the past, and what it was to be in the future—for the atoning nature of God existed from all eternity, and is going on to all eternity. The Lamb was historically slain in the time of Christ ; but long before the coming of Christ there was the Divine atoning love—there was the vicarious suffering of the Saviour. In other words, God’s thought, God’s love, God’s pity, and God’s whole being, were perpetually suffering in patience, in uplifting, and in striving with the weak, the poor, and the sinful. And now, although no longer humbled in the flesh, Christ has not lost that peculiar element and attribute of the Divine nature—namely, substitution, imputation, vicariousness. Still He suffers in all our sufferings. He is afflicted in all our afflictions. He is concerned in all our transgressions, as a father is concerned in the transgressions of his child. The father bears up the child, and suffers more, sometimes, for the child’s transgressions than the child itself suffers. And I believe that in the paternal heart of God there is a quick and everlasting sympathy with the

welfare of men. And the thoughts of Christ Jesus follow your thoughts ; His feelings follow your feelings ; His life follows your life. He still bears your sins and your sufferings, and by His stripes are you still healed. And the atonement is God Himself. It is the past, the present, and the future."

It would be impossible to read the above sentences without being deeply impressed by their exquisite beauty and tender pathos ; and we feel that the sentiments expressed are essentially and everlastingly true. The Bible tells us that sympathy is the ruling disposition of the Divine Heart. But the old question recurs—Is this the true theory of the atonement ? This is the inquiry of the theologian. But the question cannot be answered, because it takes for granted what has never been proved—namely, that it is possible to formulate a theory of the Divine sacrifice which, in its relations to all other theories, may be styled *the* theory. The execution of such a task is not within the bounds of possibility, for the atonement is not a *measurable thing*, but an *infinite Personality*—not an *act*, but a *Divine disposition*. It is larger than any theory, yea, than all theories put together. It is a reality of eternity, not of time. God carries atonement in His bosom. Ever the same—loving, gentle, tender-hearted, sympathetic, forgiving, mother-like—is He through all the rolling eternities. There never was a moment when He was differently disposed towards the sinful sons of men from what He is to-day. He has ever loved them, and borne with them in their waywardness and sin. He has always been suffering in their behalf, and giving Himself for them. Did He ever turn a penitent sinner from His door unblessed, unforgiven, unsuccoured ? Did He ever despise the fallen and the outcast, holding forth no star of hope to them ? Did He not continually say to Israel of old, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself ; but in *Me* is thine help" ? The atonement ! It is an unalterable inclination of the Eternal Heart, an infinite yearning of the Divine Spirit, a perpetual and unwasted self-sacrifice in our heavenly Father's life ! Jesus Christ was a *visible embodiment* of the atonement ; in Him it was *disclosed, manifested* ; and He Himself is to be known as GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH.

See Him passing through life. Jealousy and hatred fasten themselves upon Him. Suffering is His daily bread. Persecution follows Him wherever He goes. His best disciples flee and forsake Him in the hour of His greatest need ; but suffering sticks to Him to the very end. Men hide their faces from Him, and hold Him in derision. They despise Him, they mock Him, they spit on Him, they gnash on Him with their teeth, they revile Him, wagging their heads, they thrust a crown of thorns on His sacred brow, they nail Him to the cross ; and so keen and intense is His suffering, by reason of such inhuman treatment, but chiefly in consequence of the heavy burden of anxiety, and responsibility, and yearning resting upon His soul, that even the very Divinity within Him seems to fail Him, and He cries out, till a bewildered universe rings with the echo, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" But who is this wondrous Being? GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH! The God who suffered and died in Jesus Christ of Nazareth was the very God who had always been suffering and agonising on men's behalf since the first beginning of human history—the mother-like Father, at the centre of whose being inheres self-sacrifice, atonement, vicarious suffering.

This is not a theory, but a simple statement of a great fact. So far as our quotations up to this point are concerned, Mr. Beecher has not theorised at all. Some may detect in his phrases a leaning toward what is known as the moral theory of the atonement, the view so powerfully and eloquently advocated by the late Horace Bushnell, Professors Maurice and Jowett, and F. W. Robertson ; but to whatever theory he may personally be leaning, he certainly introduces no theory, no speculation into the pulpit. He has a very strong aversion to preaching theories ; and in a lecture delivered before the Divinity students at Yale College he expressed himself as follows :—

"In the relation of the Saviour to the atonement I have had this experience, that thousands of men have been perplexed with what I may call its philosophical theory. I have been accustomed to teach men in regard to this matter that, first of all, Christ was to be accepted as a living fact ; that, not denying the theory of possibility as to how He

came to be the Saviour of the world, which is not without its importance, nevertheless, to know that Christ is the Saviour of the world, made so by Divine preparation, and brought hither to save men from their sins, is more important than to know just *how* it was adjusted through Divine processes and arrangements of government. For, when He presented Himself, the command was not, 'Believe in Me on account of such and such logical arguments of fitness and propriety and governmental adjustments,' but, 'Believe in Me on account of what I am.' And he that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, accepting Him, does not necessarily need to know how He came to be so and so. Must we not believe in God until we know how He came into existence, and how self-existence is possible? Must we not believe a fact until we know the whole history of that fact? Must we not read a letter until we know how the paper was manufactured, how the ink was made, and all the circumstances under which it was indited? It may be interesting to know these things; but, after all, the news which the letter contains is the main thing.

"If I am sick, and a prescription is made for me by one who is competent to make it, I do not take it because I understand the theory of my sickness, nor because I know the ingredients of the mixture which the physician has prescribed for me, nor because I know what is in his mind. I take it by faith in him—and its action is the proof of its excellence.

"Now, you can present Jesus Christ to men (I am speaking of those who are difficult to reach) so as neither to perplex them in regard to His relations to the Godhead, nor to entangle them in discussions of the theory and philosophy of the Divine atoning work.

"If you present the mere fact that Christ died to save sinners, the heart will often say, as a refrain, 'Of whom I am the chief!' If you say that Christ, by His own nature, by His declared love, by His offices as Redeemer of the world, will receive all souls that come to Him, and purify them, and save them, that is enough for salvation. It may not be enough for you in making out your system of philosophy or of theology, but it is enough for your preaching; and you must constantly bear in mind that in

these lectures I am speaking of all these theological elements, not as to their structural value, but merely as to their functional use in the practical work of preaching. I apprehend that more men have been converted by the simple presentation of Christ as a Person than by the presentation of the atonement as a doctrine. Without undervaluing the doctrine or philosophy of the atonement, as it is held by one school or by many, I say that if you preach the Lord Jesus Christ, revealed in the Word of God, as One who came into the world to pity, to spare, to uphold, and to save men, you will be more apprehensible, and you will come nearer and more quickly to men's consciousness, than if you go a long way around and undertake to explain the problems of the moral government of God as it is administered in the universe, and attempt to show how it is that God is able to do this, that, or the other thing—how, for instance, He can be just, and yet the justifier of those who believe.

“It is the living, personal Christ, therefore, who ought to be the end and object of your ministry: not to the neglect of those other questions, but because the great mass of men are on a plane, where they will be more susceptible to the fact than to any reasoning upon the fact.”

But because he does not preach theologically, because he does not present a systematic Saviour, because he deals in common phrases which appeal with force to the present generation, and does not use any of the technical terms of theology, many have inferred that he denies the atonement altogether, and has banished it from his ministry. In answer to this charge we find the following:—“I have received many, many, kind letters, well-intentioned, from persons who, while they thought my preaching was edifying to those who were already Christians, did not believe it was exactly the right kind of preaching for those who had not begun to be Christians. And they complained especially because I said so little about the *blood of Christ*, and so little about the *atonement of Christ*, and so little about a *plan of salvation*, and so little about the *cross*.

“Now, look back at all these historical phrases. I recognise that once they not only were living terms, but had a distinct relation and benefit in the use of the people by

whom they were first employed. I can understand how, to the Jews, brought up as they were, 'atonement,' 'sacrifice,' and 'blood,' might have come home with fresh and vivid meaning. But you have never seen a bullock killed for sacrifice; you live two thousand years from anything of the sort; and yet you are keeping up the terms of sacrifice and slaughter. And I hold that while we may use these terms reverently, because they are Scriptural, and have a certain artificially sacred association connected with them, it is far better to take the living God, and bring Him, by the language which is given us *to-day*, to the bosom, and heart, and confidence of men.

"Tell me, have I failed to preach a living Christ? Tell me, have I failed to preach a Christ burning with sympathy for sinful men? Tell me, have I failed to show men, dying in their sins, that there was a love of God that could put its arms about them, and cleanse them, and lift them up into its own felicity, if they were willing? Have I been faithless to this? Then God forgive me! for all my ministry has been empty. But to me the heaven has been one magnificent procession of divinities. To me Christ has been all in all, Alpha and Omega, beginning and end, ever-present and ever-living. I have, to be sure, not preached a *system* of revelations. I have not used the abstract term, *plan of salvation*. I have not talked about *the atonement*. I have not undertaken to sound abstract doctrines in your ears. I have done better than that; and I call God to witness that it is better. I have preached a living Jesus, as a Brother, a Friend, a Saviour, an ever-loving God; and this is better than preaching any of these abstractions. It is better than preaching any of the old symbolic forms of Scripture, and especially better than preaching those dogmas that have been constructed by philosophy in modern times or mediæval days. I hold that the true preaching is to make every man feel that God has had compassion on him; that God, instead of being afar off, is near; that He is powerful; that in the struggle which men are waging with pride and selfishness, with the appetites and passions, they are not alone; that not only are the heavenly hosts spectators, but chiefly He is a spectator who died for them, and ever intercedes for them.

"I have preached this. It is right preaching. If there was more of it theology would not be so dead, and churches would not be so thin. It is because preaching is usually doctrinal and abstract that it does not touch men, and that they do not want it. What man wants, who is striving with an infirmity, is to be told, 'God does not hate you. He feels for you. He has shown it in that He has suffered for you. And as He did once in Jerusalem so will He do again. It is the essential, inherent, eternal nature of God, to give Himself for the rescue of those who are poor.'

"Man is low down. His guiding light blazes yonder. With every step upwards he is coming nearer and nearer to himself, because he is coming nearer to his God. One man is tempted with lust, another with pride, another with avarice, another with domineering ambition, another with an appetite for drunkenness and gluttony. Here come men, with these various experiences, and cluster before God. Is there any redemption for them? Is there any remedy for their troubles? Men hate them; lust hisses at them. A rod of iron is wielded over them in the community. Men that do wrong very soon become discouraged and outcast; and they need help. The point of sympathy and succour in the whole universe is in the heart of the revealed God—in Jesus Christ."

Many orthodox divines are doubtful as to the propriety of using, in this day, the highly symbolical phrases of the Bible respecting the atoning work of God in Christ. They do not think the terms *blood*, and *blood-shedding*, and *expiation* are adapted to the modes of thought which prevail in these modern times; and it is a serious question with them whether, as ministers, it is their duty to retain them. Should not every preacher study them carefully in all their relationships, and ascertain their inner meaning, and then convey that meaning to his hearers in terms suited to their comprehension? Dr. Bushnell was at one time of the opinion that the altar-terms, as he called them, ought to be preserved in the language of the pulpit. In a part of his "Vicarious Sacrifice," now discontinued, we find these significant words: "Without these forms of the altar we should be utterly at a loss in making any use of the Christian facts that would set

us in a condition of practical reconciliation with God. Christ is good, beautiful, wonderful. His disinterested love is a picture by itself; His forgiving patience melts into my feelings; His passion rends open my heart; but what is He for, and how shall He be made unto me the salvation I want? One word—*He is my sacrifice*—opens all to me, and beholding Him, with all my sins upon Him, I count Him my offering. I come unto God by Him, and enter into the holiest by His blood.” Mr. Beecher, on the other hand, as we have seen, thinks that he succeeds better without the old terms than he could with them. The danger attending their abandonment is, that the preacher, not having caught the spiritual meaning, may misinstruct, and therefore mislead his people. The danger is indeed so great that it is not wise for the generality of ministers to depart from the language of inspiration.

In recent years Mr. Beecher has often expressed himself as antagonistic to the Calvinistic views of the atonement. He does not believe in expiation. He ridicules the notion that the death of Christ was necessary as a satisfaction to Divine justice. How he gets over certain passages in the New Testament, which seem to teach that, apart from the death of His only-begotten Son, God could not forgive sins, he does not condescend to explain. His latest utterances on this subject are the following:—

“I believe the atonement is not a plan, an act, or a series of actions, exterior to God, devised to amend a broken law, but that it is the inherent and eternal nature of Divine love. The life, the teachings, the sufferings, the death and resurrection of Christ were but the means of disclosing the atoning nature of God. They were an illustrious exposition of an eternal fact—an exposition of atonement, and not the atonement itself. I believe it was the erection of a system of living influences designed to act, not upon God or His law, or upon the public sentiment of the universe, but upon the heart of man; that the life, teachings, and death of Christ were simply instruments by which the heart of man might be interested and affected. The beauty of holiness, the attractive sweetness of Divine love, the brooding care and kindness of everlasting strength towards weakness and

wickedness—these were the influences flowing from the life and sufferings of Christ.” And again: “I do not hold to the theory of the atonement as it has been held. You will ask me, perhaps sarcastically—*Which* theory? I have at home the statement of twenty well-defined and full-fledged theories of the atonement; and one might very sensibly ask—Which of all these? I hold to this: that the Divine nature, because it is Divine, broods the whole human family everywhere, and that the innermost tendency of God’s administration is to stimulate men to rise from the lower to the higher stages.”





CHAPTER VI.

THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (*Continued*).

WE will devote this chapter to a consideration of Mr. Beecher's opinions about The Bible, The Church, The Future Life, and a few other cognate subjects.

1. *The Bible*.—The best summary of Mr. Beecher's views of the Scriptures which we have ever come across is given by Professor Fowler in his "American Pulpit," a book which has long been out of print; and we beg leave to transcribe his remarks, which are an abstract of two sermons:—"On this subject we have heard him preach two sermons. They were thoroughly studied and compact, so that any omission, by so much, mars the completeness of the presentation; yet some notes taken at the time may serve as valuable hints to those interested in such topics. Mr. Beecher stated at the outset, that no man can form a correct idea of the Scriptures till he gets rid of all notions which makes it merely a *book*, prepared like other books. It is not so much written as *lived*, and lived continually through thousands of years. It is the record of the education of the human race by God, and running parallel with it. The great law of its composition was—that Truth should be given with relation simply to that which drew it out.

"You must imagine a race, in the beginning, born in ignorance. The idea that Adam and Eve had stores of knowledge, from the use of which the race has fallen away,

is fabulous. Till the deluge, the earth was filled with overgrown creatures, ill-developed in their social and moral natures. When man came upon the earth, he was without knowledge. The stars spake not to him. He knew no foreign lands. It was centuries before the arts were discovered. He lay down to die upon herbs which had healing in them, and he knew it not. The metals were known only in their simplest uses. He had no laws, no sciences, no books, till thousands of years had rolled away. And though it is preposterous to discuss God's designs, yet it is not to say that what He did He meant to do. Had He meant to bring man into the world in full stature, man would not have walked through five thousand years in a state of mental somnambulism.

"If the race were to step on the earth as our children do into a school, the Bible would have been made for them, and the first man would have had it as well as the last. We find it already written, and waiting for us, but the first generations found not a line. They found only the world into which they were born. The race has evolved the Bible, not the Bible the race, except in later days. God educated men, that through them He might write the Bible for later days. He evolved the mind of man in the process of education, and then told what He had done, and that is the Bible.

"You will see the importance of this statement, and that by it a mass of rubbish is cleared away. There can be a superstitious worship of the Book, as of anything else. If the Bible is the expression of God, then we must interpret it in one way. If it is an account of what was done for man by God, then we must look at it in another way.

"Revelation was not an act performed upon the writers of the Bible. It was an event in the life of man. The Bible has always followed the race until the time of Christ. Revelation was an historical fact outside of the Bible before it was a recorded fact in the Bible. We should suppose, then, that its truths would be simple, and stated with reference to the ripeness of the times. We should expect it to look like a book written in the infancy of the race. And you will find that it is so; that it is fragmentary, and obnoxious to criticism, if you subject it to the canons of

criticism by which books now are judged ; that the earlier books would contain a large mass of matter, useful and vital in the first years, but no longer so, except as history. God would not reveal anything which would not be just as true now as then, but the methods would be transitory. There is not one great truth in the Old Testament that is not just as true now as when it was written ; nay, rather, those truths rose like stars, and now they shine like suns. We understand so much that faith to us is as much more than theirs as an oak is more than an acorn. But we should expect that the methods by which God taught men would be different then from now—and so it is. We should expect that men would be permitted to do things which now they would not. The truths stand, but the methods change. You cannot take a man forty-five years old, and make him look at the same picture-books, and play with the same toys, as in his childhood. So Christ says that many things were permitted because of the hardness of their hearts. God allowed certain developments in the family, in the church, in the nation, till He could do better. And this attempt to go back to the old world, and those things which belong to its infancy—to polygamy and to slavery—is an attempt to make man apostatise from his manhood. Then they were children, now they are men. Yet not one jot or tittle of the great truths, which are fundamental and humanitarian, have disappeared. They all stand, and are truer to us than to them. The customs, the rites, the ceremonies are gone. We have other methods of obtaining truth, and the old ones have been left behind, as Christ's grave-clothes after He had risen.

“The distinction between revelation and inspiration is this:—Revelation is the making known of things which were unknown to those who received them. Inspiration is a Divine action upon the human soul, which leads a man to make known things, or to do things, which otherwise he would not say or do. No one needed a revelation to disclose to the Israelites the burning mountain, because they were there and saw it ; but if one were to record the facts, he might need inspiration to enable him to collect the salient points, and show rightly the whole transaction. Revelation is

imparting some new idea. Inspiration is imparting an influence by which he can know what is correct. If I tell my child about seas and countries which he has never seen, I reveal it to him. If I find him telling it to his brother in a dull, sleepy way, and I quicken up his mind by the action of my own, I act upon him very much like an inspiration. I do not give this analogy as declaring the way in which the Old Testament was given to man, but simply to show the difference between revelation and inspiration.

"I understand the Scripture doctrine of inspiration to be, that God rules not only by influencing the senses of men in the ordinary way, but that He influences them by the direct action of His mind upon theirs. How this is done, what is the nature of this influence, we do not know. We may suggest that it takes place in this way or that, but the suggestion is no better than a guess, for it is one of those things that are beyond the sphere of nature or sense ; and as He has not disclosed it to us, we shall not soon find it out.

"The inspiration of the writers of the Scriptures was not a separate thing, standing out apart from analogies. It was not distinguished by the fact that God's Spirit rested upon them, for His Spirit rests upon other men. Their inspiration was a high and enduring state, existing in the mind of one man for years, or of a series of men, so that it often takes scores of men to make the events which bring out the truth. It is not like the inspiration of the author, who, thinking intensely on his subject, becomes filled and permeated till the thought bursts forth in glowing imagery and living words. It was complex and laborious.

"God had reference to the original adaptedness of the men to the work. For example, Moses was prudent, kind, good, fertile in invention and judicious in administration ; and this he was by nature. He had the germs of these qualities in him, and they were developed by God's Spirit. Without learning, a man is elementary all his life ; and therefore Moses was educated. He was brought up in Pharaoh's court, in all the learning of the Egyptians. There he was tested in actual life, was foiled, was exiled, and went into banishment, till all mental passion was consumed, and

at eighty years of age he began life; and he spent forty years more going with this people through their education. As a part of that work he reduced to writing their history; he laid down a code of laws; he established a ritual of worship; and his inspiration covered all his administrative life, as well as the time spent in recording its history.

"Take David as another example. David had a loving nature, a heart of profound sensibility. He was in love all his life long; but this natural endowment was not enough; he must be broken by sorrow—and he was. He was tried by filial ingratitude; he was driven out of his kingdom; he was made to feel that only God stood between him and destruction. His psalms are inspiration, but the inspiration rested upon him not merely while his pen was moving, but during all his experimental, actual life.

"After this came the era of the apostacy. The nation was stripped and spoiled, and went into foreign lands, and the ten tribes sank, and no man can tell where they went down. Now it was needful that beacon-lights should be set up, to tell men where they should walk; and God brought forward for that purpose the Prophets, who would have been eminent men in any age by natural faculties: and these men increased by God's influence. The future was unveiled to them; and, thus inspired, they wrote their prophecies, which are not like the voice of man, but of God, and come down to us, sounding through the ages, like the coming on of storms in mountain regions.

"At length came the fulness of time. Now all other teachers were merged in Christ. He spoke those great moral truths which underlie humanity. It has been said that He did not teach much that was new—there is more new truth, and deeper truth, in John's Gospel than will serve the world for centuries; and it is truth that is not to be gotten by reading; a man must grow up to it in his moral nature.

"I think those who doubt the influence of the Divine mind upon men cannot have a case more insoluble than the proceedings of the disciples before and after Pentecost. Before, it was as much as they could do to carry themselves alone. They did not understand Christ's words. They

could not translate His parables. They were scattered hither and thither by His death. After His resurrection they rallied somewhat, and gathered in a prayer-meeting. Then came that sound as of a rushing, mighty wind, and the tongues of cloven fire, and instantly they are filled with new life. They are stronger than the whole world besides. No persecution can stay them. They go forth over the world, and wherever they come they take the town, they move great masses of men, and over all nations they work gigantic influences; God's inspiration is in them. I see no reason why the account of this change should not be taken literally. The most obvious is the most philosophical solution: God gave them this power by the action of His own mind.

"Their writings after this are the life of Christ, the history of their own preaching, and the letters which they wrote to various churches. Their judgments were made unerring; they recorded rightly what they observed truly; and they taught with authority. They were mostly from the lower ranks of society, but not of the lower ranks of men. They were eminently fitted by nature for their work. And all through the Bible God employed men, as inspired men, who had a natural fitness for the special work. I do not know of a case in which a man was called to a work which was so different from his nature as to excite remark. When the work required wisdom, God called a wise man; when learning, an educated man; when bravery, a daring man; when exalted poetry, an imaginative man; and so throughout. Each was inspired so as to act with increased power in the line of his faculties. When human faculties were sufficient, they were used. With things so low as to come within the reach of natural powers, these were employed, unassisted by inspiration; but when insufficient, God added His influence. At times He raised them up so that they saw future events; but all in strict analogy. Thus we see that in all times, from Moses and Job to John, men have been employed, and kept, and guided, so that they should do, without error, what God wanted them to do; so as to work in one age for other ages.

"The question arises—Has this inspiration stopped? I have said that it was under an universal law that God was

accustomed to influence the minds of men. I think that God does really inspire men now, but not officially, so to speak—rather, personally. It has not the authority of David's and John's inspiration; but I believe that all exalted states of mind are inspired. I do not say that the baser moods are not also, but they are not inspired of God.

"A man is made to act from the influence of organic objects; from hunger and cold; from animal passions; from a thousand spheres of influence we draw motives. But these are the lower influences, compared with the influence of God upon the soul. God has never cast us out of His arms. He does not leave us to ourselves. The strongest, best actions of men are the work of God. I think that I am inspired, not like a prophet, so that I can say to you, 'Thus saith the Lord;' but I believe that when I prepare a sermon I have the mind of the Lord resting upon mine. Compared with the inspiration of the prophets, it is lower, subordinate, personal; but it is real, and just as truly from God as that which rested on David. I think God inspires men for the right, for duty, for liberty, for defence of the truth; and I think Divine inspiration is also given to those who teach men the Beautiful.

"As a flower comes to the use of itself under the influence of the sun, so does a man under the influence of God. There are inspirations of God for public ends. Those labourers that are raised up to lead men according to His plans, have *authoritative* inspiration, which enables them to do for their times what they could not do without it. I look upon all the chiefs of men as walking in a sort of inspired dream, doing what God gives them to do; and the religious teachers as acting under the influence of God's mind: and, so far as they are true, they are true by reason of God's influence. But such inspiration lacks official authority. It is given to the man that he may do his work. The men who were required to have an authoritative inspiration have passed away. The word now spoken is true to us, not because it has a 'Thus saith the Lord,' but because it meets the soul's want. Their work will not be repeated again. Whatever remains can be found out and proclaimed without any other binding rule than the authority of its own

nature. But the difference between inspiration now and then, is not a difference in kind, but only in degree. Inspiration now is more diffused, and it is in the circle in which the man is to be the teacher ; but it is not so exalted, for we have no Bible to write, and we have no times such as those in which the prophets and apostles lived. Our work is to take the truth and the principles which we have, and to educate men by them ; and in this work, just in proportion as we keep our hearts pure and clear, we shall be under the influence of God's teaching and guidance."

The style of the foregoing extract is so transparent and delightful, so unconventional and unique, so utterly untheological and free, that the reading of it leaves a most happy impression upon the mind. And the matter is no less excellent. All the ideas are fresh and sparkling, and withal, necessarily true. Mr. Beecher's definition of revelation and inspiration harmonises fully with that which is generally received by orthodox divines. Some may think that as he proceeds with the discussion he appears to forget, if not to depart from his definition ; but we hold that that is a mistake, inasmuch as he adheres throughout to the central and all-important statement—that the Bible is God's Word. We are confident that on this subject there is no breach between him and orthodoxy, and that his alleged heterodoxy is only *apparent*, not *real*, inhering more in the forms of expression used than in the essence of the thoughts themselves. It is true that he does not hold to any strict theory of inspiration. He does not believe, for instance, in verbal inspiration ; in fact, he positively denies that the writers of the Scripture were mere machines working unconsciously and, as it were, automatically under the influence of the Divine Spirit—simply channels through which the river of revelation flowed without their consent or even their knowledge. Those holy men of old were God's servants in no such sense as that. They were instruments in His hands, but not *passive* instruments. That theory of inspiration is now obsolete. Mr. Beecher's theory of inspiration may be thus summarised:—That the men who wrote the Bible were both naturally adapted and specially qualified for the work, and that it is not within the power

of the human race, in its ordinary condition, to produce such a book ; that the Scriptures are divine in a sense no other writings are ; and that the Old and New Testaments form the only *authoritative* rule of faith and conduct, and that both the traditions of the Church and the opinions of individual men are to be taken for what they are worth, as tried at the bar of Scripture, reason, and experience. Does the most rigid orthodoxy require more than that ? There is here no hard and fast theory of inspiration, but the fundamental *fact* or *truth* of inspiration is most unequivocally insisted upon. Mr. Beecher accepts the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity, because he finds it in the Bible. He believes in the Divinity of Christ, in miracles, and in the immortality of the soul, on the authority of Scriptural statements.

The *method* or *manner* of revelation is a matter of secondary importance. It is involved in mystery. Nor does it matter to us who the writers of the Bible were, or whether all its books were composed by the men whose names they bear. "The Bible makes the test of its own validity to be in what it can do. Modern philosophy is disposed to look back and test Scripture by its origin ; but the Scripture itself insists upon its validity on account of its moral power. To be sure, to some extent that very power is affected by the question of its origin and authority ; but not to such an extent as theologians have been wont to suppose. For, it once being conceded that the contents of the Bible are truths, it makes no difference whether they were inbreathed upon martyrs and prophets, or whether those martyrs or prophets found them out of their own accord. For the truth is of God, whether it be found out miraculously, or from natural causes ; whether it be found out through science, or through processes of economy. The authority of truth is that it is true." When truth is doubted or denied, it may then be necessary to consider its origin, and the *method* of its origin ; but when the truth is accepted as authoritative, it is not necessary to give ourselves any such trouble. Again :—"You may shift books, and change the names of authors, and show that parts of the books of Moses were written after Moses died, and discover

errors in chronology, and take the crown from the head of one monarch and put it on the head of another; you may show that there are innumerable mistakes in the vehicle of revelation; but does anything change the great central truths in which the destiny of man is wrapped up, and on which the hopes of the human family rest? They are not changed."

It is quite interesting to mark the harmony which characterises Mr. Beecher's views on this great subject throughout his public ministry. Our first quotation was a summary of two sermons preached some time previous to 1856. We shall now give an extract from a sermon delivered Sabbath morning, 11th July 1880, and the reader is invited to compare the two:—

"I believe that God, in every age, and in all nations, has moved upon the hearts of men by His Holy Spirit, inspiring them to whatever is true, pure, and noble. I believe that the Scriptures of the Old Testament and of the New contain the fruit of that inspiration as it was developed in the Hebrew nation; and I fully and heartily accept the Bible according to the Apostolic and only declaration of the nature of Divine inspiration: 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' I believe that as the true understanding of God's works in the outward and material world can be gained only by careful study of the facts of nature, so the true view of the inspiration of Scripture is to be gained not by theories or traditions, but by a rigorous study of the facts—its structure, origin, the nature of its contents; and this is the more necessary, in that the book, as we hold it now, was not an immediate and completed gift of God to man, but was a growth of ages: it was written by different hands, in different languages, with centuries of intervals between part and part, and the chief substance of its truth was conveyed by the Divine mind to the human mind in the way in which God ordinarily imparts the truth—through human experience.—I believe that the Bible is largely a record of history, and in this respect must be studied as we

study any history ; that it contains a large measure of poetry, and that that is to be accepted not as a science, but as we accept and use poetry ; that it is largely a literature, and is to be construed as we construe literature, not as an exact science ; that it is a record of institutions, laws, worship, which have answered their ends and passed away, and that, therefore, different parts of the Scripture have different degrees of value. The Ten Commandments are of more value to us than the account of the trimmings of the sanctuary ; the teachings of Jesus Christ are of larger scope and of more value than the teachings of Moses ; the narratives of the Gospels are more valuable than the histories of Ruth and Esther, beautiful as these are. In other words, different parts of the Scripture have different values, and men are competent and permitted to judge of their value, and use them as they fit the exigencies of their lives.

“I believe that the moral and spiritual teachings of the sacred Scripture were subject to the same law of unfolding as was its outward form, and that the ideas of purity, truth, justice, duty, of manhood, of the Divine nature, of destiny, reward, retribution, and immortality were progressive, and are seen to be in the Bible as a ‘rising light, shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day ;’ and that the later and developed moral truths are not to be interpreted by the earlier, but the earlier by the fuller form of the later. I hold, with all the Church, that the Scripture is not a guide to scientific knowledge ; that it records the best conceptions from period to period of scientific truths which were then held ; that it does no violence to the spirit of truth to accept the fuller disclosures of physical truths which God is making in our day over those recorded in an earlier age. I do not believe that inspiration has ceased. I believe that God’s Holy Spirit still moves upon the hearts of men, and truth is still sprouting, growing, blossoming, and bearing precious fruit in the minds and lives of His people ; and while the light vouchsafed to the individual is only for the comfort and guidance of the individual, and without authority on the consciences of others, yet, when such truth has gone through the experience of multitudes, and has proved itself not special and personal, but wide and uni-

versal, it becomes of value and of binding authority, though it has no command in Scripture. That the truths of Scripture are to be discerned, understood, and taught according to the moral sense of God's people in every age enlightened by the Holy Spirit. And I adopt the language of the Westminster Confession, with many parts of which I do not find myself in agreement:—"The Supreme Judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." Speaking, that is, to living men who interpret Scripture by the truth grown up around them in their own experiences. That a persistent disregard of the structure, nature, and genius of the Bible tends to rob it of its true power; to carry men back to bondage; to set them against the even working of the inspiration of God going on in each age; to tempt men to hide their eyes from the light, and to introduce a wrestling casuistry into interpretation which demoralises the reason, and shuts the ears of men to what God has to say to them in every age. With increasing years and wider experience, I more and more value this Book, as containing the highest moral truths to which the human mind has been admitted, and from its beginning to its end it enables the sincere and intelligent man to know what is evil and to shun it, and to know what is good and to follow it; and with yet greater emphasis than when the apostles wrote it, it is a Book by which a man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work."

We pass on now to examine his views on *The Church and its Ordinances*. All Christians maintain that the Church is a Divine institution. It was, and is, the will of Christ that His disciples should unite and wisely organise for the purpose of helping the development, and perfecting in their own hearts, and the spreading abroad into the world, of the glorious principles of their common religion. His commission to all believers is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." But such a commission could not possibly be fulfilled without united, organised enthusiasm. Hence, the Christian Church might be defined

as a society, or societies, composed of people whose supreme object in life is to serve God in the most efficient manner possible to them. This definition is broad enough, we hope, to satisfy all Christians. The principle that underlies it is, that unity is strength—if it be unity in a good cause, and between honest, sincere people. It is self-evident that a hundred men, combining harmoniously in a worthy enterprise, will accomplish immeasurably more good than they would or could if each were to work alone, separately and independently of all the others. The Church is a holy fraternity, a body or bodies of men associated in the interest of a common Christianity. Such is the visible Church, and such is also the spiritual or invisible Church, at least so far as it exists in this world.

Mr. Beecher teaches the ordinary orthodox view on this point. He does not believe that Jesus Christ gave any specific directions to His disciples respecting the constitution and government of His Church, but he *does* believe that He left behind Him the germ out of which has grown the Christian Church of to-day. He does not agree with those who argue that this or that form of Church government is of Divine authority, and plainly taught in the New Testament, but most heartily does he endorse the opinion that the Church, as already defined, is a Divine organisation. The Church itself is Divine, but all forms of government and polity are alike human, and are of Divine sanction only in so far as they succeed in realising the original ideal of the Church. We must make a distinction here between the Church, as such, and the different churches or sects which prevail within its bounds. Episcopalianism, Congregationalism, Methodism, in all its various forms, Presbyterianism—all these are so many churches or sects, and have a human origin; but there underlies them all the Church, the true, living Church to which they are seeking, each in its own way and according to its ability, to give expression. The Church is one, and lives through all ages; but churches, as individual organisations, are evanescent. Mr. Beecher regards this distinction as being of the utmost importance. The Church he respects and loves, but for the “isms” of the sects he has but little regard. He very often remarks that “some churches

are better than others, but that that is the best church which makes the best men." Every true Christian is, therefore, larger than all the denominations in Christendom—a member of all evangelical churches, in that he is a member of the Church which fills and transcends all the sects. Here is another remark to the same effect: "Manhood is bigger than any machine by which one is educated. A man is larger than the common school where he learns. If an academy graduates a man, it is because he is too big to be held. A nest is good for a robin while it is an egg, but it is bad for a robin when it has got wings. It is a poor place to fly in, but it is a good place to be hatched in. Institutions always dig their own graves if they are good for anything. In an educatory institution that is good for anything, men become larger than the institution. The candlestick holds the butt of the candle, but does it hold the light? Beneficent institutions of every kind are but men-holders or men-makers. I would not then urge religion upon you, having you to think, 'I am to be a Methodist,' or 'I am to be a Baptist,' or 'I am to be a Congregationalist or Presbyterian,' or 'I am to be a Churchman'—a High one, a Low one, or a Middling one. Any man's grindstone is good enough to grind you on; any man's shop is good enough to make you in; any church is good enough for you to develop a Christian life in. There is not a church on earth that has not something of truth in it; and enough, if you have a mind to appropriate it, to feed you upon, and to build you up to manhood. There is no church that contains all the truth. There is no church that is supereminent over all others. The various churches are so many schools and academies and colleges in which men are being educated. And your manhood should be larger and nobler than any sect—should fill up and over-run the measure. As a vine, growing in a garden by the side of the road, does not confine all its flowers and clusters to the garden side, but hangs over the wall, and bears blossoms and clusters in the road, so a man, wherever he grows, should be larger than the thing that he grows in."

Men do not join the Church, then, because they are perfect, but because they are imperfect and sinful. "Do

men go to school because they know so much, or because they know so little? Do men go to a physician because they are sick, or do they wait till they are well and then go? Yet, to hear people speak of uniting with the Church, one would suppose that they thought it their duty to stay out till they were perfect, and then to join it as ornaments. They who are weak, but who wish strength; they who are ignorant, but hunger for knowledge; they who are unable to go alone, and need sympathy and society to hold them up; they who are lame, and need crutches: in short, they who know the plague and infirmity of a selfish heart, a worldly nature, a sinful life, and who desire, above all things, to be lifted above them, have a preparation for the Church. If you could walk without limping, why use a crutch at all? If you are already good enough, why go into the Church? But if you are so lame that a staff is a help, so infirm that company and ordinances will aid you, then you have a right to the fellowship of the Church. To unite with the Church is not to profess that you are a saint, that you are good, and, still less, that you are better than others. It is but a public recognition of your weakness and your spiritual necessities. The Church is not a gallery for the better exhibition of eminent Christians, but a school for the education of imperfect ones, a nursery for the care of weak ones, an hospital for the better healing of those who need assiduous care."

This view of church-membership is a very comforting and encouraging one. Perfection should not be looked for in professors of religion. Their profession is not that they are perfect, not that they are sinless, but that they are endeavouring to follow Christ as closely as they can. But still the goal they have in view is perfection, sinlessness. Daily do they stumble and fall, and soil their garments; but they are praying for the coming of the time when they shall wear angelic robes and speak a seraphic tongue. And it is their duty to exhibit even now a higher type of morality and goodness than that which characterises the world. They ought to be better than other men, more conscientious, holier, and purer. In the ideal of Christ, the Church was the light of the world, a city set

upon an hill which cannot be hid, the salt of the earth, a candle put on a candlestick, giving light to all that are within its reach. Mr. Beecher speaks very emphatically on this point:—"We are the examples, the leaders, the models, the ideals of the world. In other words, those things that men have been accustomed to say do not belong to the Church, are the very things that do belong to it. I hold that the stigma which is thrown upon churches and Christians, of advocating 'isms,' of being ismistical, although it is meant to pierce, is a part of that crown of thorns which it is their glory to wear. And the church which is never stigmatised as having an 'ism,' is, by the mind of God, stigmatised as coming short of its duty, and failing to be, as it was meant to be, the light of the world. For the business of the Church is not to represent the average advancement of the community, but to discern clearer light, and higher ideals, and nobler things, and to insist upon lifting up human conduct in the individual, and in carrying the community up along the line of admirableness, and towards more glorious achievements. And a church that is alive, a church that has a teaching communicancy, a church whose members are aspiring to nobler conduct, will be a disturbing church; it will be continually espousing unpopular causes; it will be all the time going aside from the preaching of the Gospel; it will be for ever agitating the elements of society; it will be always unsettling men, and will never give them any rest. We are to have no rest till we take it in heaven. God meant that there should be no rest in this world, except so far as contentment, as against envy, and jealousy, and fretting, and dissension, may be called rest. Aspiration is to be the trait of every Christian body; and the function of every church of Christ is to stimulate those in the community in which they dwell, so that there shall be a holy ambition burning for higher things, nobler development, and a purer life. Everywhere it is the business of the Christian Church to search the Word of God, and, by prayer and the interpretation of Divine truth, find out things admirable and glorious; and then bear witness, by precept and example, in respect to those things, that life may be augmenting, and that the world may be growing

toward the measure of the stature of the fulness of perfect things in Christ Jesus."

Mr. Beecher is truly eloquent on the subject of sects. He regards them as so many regiments belonging to the one grand army of the Cross. That regiment is the best which is most successful in attacking the common foe. His first question always is, not to what sect do you belong? but, how much work do you do in the Master's service? He believes that the Church exists for a great, solemn purpose, and that it is utter nonsense to be for ever discussing whether this or that branch of it has the divinely-approved polity. If a church is wide-awake, filled with men and women whose hearts are touched by a live-coal from off the altar, and whose only desire is to become holy, as Christ is holy, and to send forth into the world a sacred, subtle, sanctifying influence; if a church is prospering in the glorious work of saving souls, it bears upon its face the impress of the Divine sanction and approval, be its outward form what it may. Should the Episcopalian Church present itself before him, and claim that it has come down from the apostles, and that its bishops and archbishops, its deans and canons, its rectors and curates, are the only authoritative successors of the twelve apostles, Mr. Beecher would look it full in the face, and say, "Prove your claim by your fruit. What work have you done? How many souls have been saved through you? Do you cultivate the grace of humility? Do you deny yourself for Christ's sake? If you do the work of an apostolic Church, I have no objection to your using that lofty title." His argument would be the same in all other cases. The Church is divine; but all the sects are alike human, and stand on the same basis as other institutions, such as schools and colleges, hospitals and infirmaries, temperance societies and political clubs. A church, as to its outward form, is superior to other organisations only in so far as its object is higher and worthier. It is impossible to do Mr. Beecher justice without keeping this distinction ever in mind. There are those who ignorantly charge him with ridiculing the Christian Church as such, whereas he has never done anything of the kind. He has often joked about and made game of the different denominations that

exist, but he admires and loves, and, with all his heart, endeavours to serve the Church. Sectarianism he abhors with infinite abhorrence. He looks at it as a demon constantly ejecting venom from hell; as the supreme murderer of godliness, around whose neck no hangman has ever succeeded in putting the rope of execution. How many churches has it rent asunder! How many hearts has it embittered and alienated! Oh, the sad disasters it has wrought in the Christian Church since the days of its Divine Founder!

Apart from the sectarian spirit, however, Mr. Beecher has no objection to the sects—he rather likes them. He compares them to flowers, all children of the sun, yet widely different in their structure and appearance. “Would you,” he cries, “reduce them all to one, and have nothing but daisies, nothing but tulips, or nothing but violets?” On this whole subject take the following:—

“Sectarian organisations, but for their thorns and prickles, are all of them wise. I believe in the organisation of Christians into churches, as I believe in the forming of churches, by elective affinities, into sects. I do not see any harm in denominations. I would just as soon see twenty more as twenty less. I should not care if sects were multiplied until every household was, in some sense, a Christian church, maintaining its own personality, and individuality, and separateness, and distinctness from every other one. But sects are not Christianity. They do not represent the whole of it. This church does not represent the whole of Christianity. I know that perfectly well. Nor does the Episcopal Church. It represents some elements in Christianity better than we do; and some elements not so well. And the Methodist Church represents some parts of Christianity better than any other denomination. And the Presbyterian Church—there are many things that the world would miss if that church were to sink out of view. All of them are joined in certain great elements of truth. And then, the specialities which distinguish one from another usually are specialities that have in them a truth which is nowhere else developed with such breadth and force. And while each has a common stock of Christianity, which unites

and affiliates it to all other denominations, for a special work it is better than any other denomination. And Christianity is represented by the sum of all the sects, and not by any one of them.

"Are not some of them nearer to Christ than others? Very likely they may be. But it is not for any sect to say that it is the one. It is right to believe it; but if it is believed, it should be believed with all modesty. It should be believed without positive certainty. But I think it better to take the larger view, and look upon the Church of Christ on earth as a comprehensive whole, represented by all the organised churches.

"I go further than that. When you have taken that hoary old sect, the Greek Church; when you have taken the next sect, the Roman Church; and then, when you have taken the other sects in the Protestant Church; and when you have agglomerated them all, if you say, 'Do they altogether express the whole of Christianity?' I say, No. God is working by other instruments than these. The Church of God is not merely composed of ecclesiastical organisations, which men call churches. He works by the whole concourse of nature. All laws that rule the heavens, all laws that rule the earth, and all natural laws, or laws in natural science, are God's instruments in religion. All organisations in society that ward off evil, or do good, are a part of God's comprehensive machinery, by which He is to transform the world. All great industrial callings have something in them that is working toward the higher and toward the better, if they be really civilised, and are under the influence of Christian feelings. And when you look for God's kingdom, do not look inside of a sect, or inside of an individual. What individual man is large enough to say, 'I epitomise Christianity?' What sect can say, 'I represent universal Christianity?' All of them together cannot say that. It takes the sum total of all benign influences on the globe, running through all generations and all periods of time, to represent the whole of God Almighty's work."

As we have already seen, Mr. Beecher is not a reckless despiser of creeds and theologies, as some suppose and allege. He maintains that the Church must have its creeds, for

a man or a church with no belief is not worthy of the name. Without moral convictions, without definite ideas of right and wrong, of virtue and evil, of human nature and its relations to duty, of God, Providence, moral government, death and immortality, bodies of men would have no moral worth whatever. But he does not believe in the permanency of creeds. They change, and ought to change, as men develop in spiritual perception and knowledge. In essence they will remain for ever the same; but in form, proportion, and emphasis they have already undergone numerous and important alterations, and they are likely to undergo many more in the future. Mr. Beecher holds that even within the bounds of one sect or church there should be varieties of creeds and opinions. His words are these:—"I am suspicious of that church whose members are one in their beliefs and opinions. When a tree is dead, it will lie anyway; alive, it will have its own growth. When men's deadness is in the Church, and their life elsewhere, all will be alike. They can be cut and polished anyway. When they are alive they are like a tropical forest—some shooting up, like the mahogany tree; some spreading like the vine; some darkling like the shrub; some lying, herb-like, on the ground; but all obeying their own laws of growth—a common law of growth variously expressed in each—and so contributing to the richness and beauty of the wood."

Is there salvation outside the visible Church? Is it essential that a man should join the Church in order to obtain eternal life? Time was when pious men advocated the theory that unless a man was in connection with some outward church his chance of acceptance with God was very slight. Such is the teaching of the Church of Rome to-day. Against such impious tyranny Mr. Beecher lifts his voice and speaks in severest tones—tones that are somewhat startling:—"I hold that bishops are all well enough. I do not object to bishops. I dare say I should like to be a bishop myself! I do not object to a pope. His place is eminently desirable; and I do not suppose there is a man in this congregation who would not be a pope if he could. It is not a pope we object to, but it is *the Pope in Rome*. We do not object to the pope that lives in us.

Every man has a pope in him. There are in the family hundreds of popes, male and female. Wherever men can have power over others, and they exercise it, and love it, they are popes. And I do not object particularly to any church that chooses to organise itself with a pope, and cardinals, and bishops, and priests, and ministers, provided it says that neither of them is of such divine ordination as to be obligatory on the whole Church. If they merely say, 'Experience has taught us that this kind of organisation, this method of preparing ministers and governors in the Church is a good one, and leads to the accomplishment of a good work, and we prefer it,' I have no more to say. It is their liberty, and I respect that liberty. I might not like to conform to such a method, but I have no objection to it. When, however, they attempt to impose it on me: when they say to me, 'You must do so and so;' when they say, 'Unless the church in which your worship is thus and thus organised, and has just such an order of men, it is not a Christian church;' when they look benevolently down upon me from their human-built walls, and say, 'You *may* be saved out of your church; don't know; it is possible; God is very merciful, but it is an uncovenanted mercy; you'll have to take your chance. We up here are going to be saved, but you down there, that live irregularly—can't make you any promises; you'd better come in here, and be safe'—when men take this way with me, I am even wickeder than they are. I have more contempt for them than they have for me. They must not attempt to force their human-made institutions upon me. If they say they are good, and take them of their own free choice because experience has shown that they are good, that is fair and rational. I make no objection to that. But where they undertake to say that it is the only thing whereby a man shall be saved, I lift up my heart and my Christ against them, and say, 'My salvation comes not through this medium or that, but from God's great love to my soul through Jesus Christ, and I am safe, though all the ocean should lift against me its mighty waves, and storms embattled should sweep the heavens.' 'If God be for me, who can be against me?' I stand in the verity of

this simple power of God's heart on my heart. That saves me. And if they say, 'You have gifts for preaching, and you might have been a tolerable preacher if you had been properly ordained.' I reply that I *was* properly ordained. My father ordained me. Ah! I was better ordained than that; my greater Father ordained me. He ordained me twice: first, when He put His hand on my head before I was born, and said, 'Be a head;' and then, after I had carried it around a few years, when He stretched out His hand and touched my heart rather than my head, and said, 'Be ordained again.' First, He makes the headpiece, to think; and then He touches the heart, and says, 'Go preach my Gospel.' When a man has had that done to him, he is ordained. A pope could not make him any better; a bishop could not make him any better; a whole presbytery could not make him any better. Yet if a man says, 'I should feel better if I only thought that this bishop had been touched by that bishop, and that bishop by that bishop, and that bishop by that bishop, and that bishop by that bishop, clear back to the apostolic battery, and that finally a little spark had come down on me,' then that is his liberty. Let him by all means take the shock! I have no objection to it. It is a free country, not only, but it is a free ecclesiastical economy. You have perfect liberty to take whatever you think will make you feel better. If this mode of ordination addresses itself to your sentiment, to your poetical instincts, or even to your affections—which is the last thing that I can imagine—and if you want it, that is the reason why you should be at liberty to take it. It is not this that I object to in high churches. It is their domination; it is their arrogance; it is their despotism; it is their declaration that *they are the people*, and that *wisdom shall die with them*; it is their assumption that there is but one order, and that is in their church. I hold that every man who knows Christ Jesus, and loves Him, and loves his fellow-men, not only has a right to preach what he is, and what Christ has done for him, and what life, and life eternal, is, but has a right, if he chooses, to gather those to whom he preaches into a brotherhood, and call them a church; and if he chooses to dispense the bread and wine to them, that is the communion

of the Lord's Supper. Though never priest saw him, nor minister touched him, he is ordained, and is authorised to administer the sacrament."

Here is another paragraph:—"The sooner it is understood that churches and sects are just what States are in this government, the better it will be. A man is born in Connecticut, and he thinks it is the best State in the Union—until he see some other. And when he goes out of it, he does not forget his native State. He goes to New York, and settles there; but does anybody think of saying to him, 'Turncoat! turncoat! born and brought up in Connecticut, and left it and gone to live in another State with an entirely different organisation?' By-and-by, on a land speculation, he moves to Michigan; but is it said of him, 'Capricious fellow! always changing his State—born in Connecticut, lived in New York, and now settled in Michigan?' What if he goes next to Illinois, and then to Mississippi, and then to Georgia, and then to the Carolinas, and to Old Virginia, does anybody charge him with recreancy? He may think that some one of these States is better than any other, and yet be a true patriot. It is a part of our civic liberty that a citizen of one State is a citizen of every State. And it ought to be so in church organisation. Here are the Methodists, the Baptists, the Lutherans, the Presbyterians of different shades, the Episcopalians, and the different shades of Catholics (for the Catholic Church is like a chestnut burr—the burr is one, but there are two nuts, and sometimes three, inside of it); here are all these various denominations or sects: and I hold that a person ought to feel about them as he does about States or towns. If you are in a place where the Episcopal Church is the one that gives the most food, do not hesitate to go into that church. There is no inconsistency in such a course. Or, going from that place to another, is it a Presbyterian Church that is best calculated to do you good? You are, perhaps, a red-hot Congregationalist; but you need not on that account hesitate to go into a Presbyterian Church. If you find that there God's ministrations best fit you, go there. These are externalities. They are matters of perfect indifference, so far as consistency is concerned."

So they are. Nevertheless, Mr. Beecher does not think that all forms and all governments are equally good or equally bad. Personally, he is a Congregationalist, and believes that that is the best form of church government; but he does not despise other forms. On a matter like this every one should be fully persuaded in his own mind, but should be also careful not to intrude his own mind upon others who may happen to be very differently persuaded. Let every one have his own creed, his own ecclesiastical form, and his own way of worshipping God, with peace and goodwill; but let no man dream that perfection dwelleth in him, and that all his brethren are in gross ignorance. Let there be mutual toleration.

Creeds and sects, then, are more beneficial than hurtful, provided that the spirit of love and heart-union is cultivated. Mr. Beecher feels confident that sectarianism will soon disappear altogether, and "that the time will come when I can worship at the hands of a Roman priest, and be edified, as I have worshipped at the hands of an English priest and bishop, and been abundantly edified. I believe the time will come when the liberty and catholicity of all sects will be such, that men will not be talking about abolishing denominations and sects. The idea is an absurdity. They never will be abolished. But the time will come, I believe, when a man will feel at home in them all, and when Christianity will be open and free to all alike. Then you will have Christian union." All will doubtless say a hearty "Amen" to that hope, though some of us may pronounce it somewhat visionary.

Mr. Beecher deals in a similar manner with Church ordinances. He regards them as hints and helps only, never as authorities. We need them just as a child needs clothes, or as a scholar needs books. They are very useful, but they should never become yokes. "What is an ordinance?" he asks. "Anything that is established, anything that is ordained. And if this church should pass a law that the services of the Sabbath-day should be from half-past ten to twelve or one o'clock, that would be an ordinance. If this church should enter into an agreement to have a Sabbath school, that would be an ordinance.

And the Lord's Supper is an ordinance established in the same way that these would be. There is not necessarily any external sanctity belonging to an ordinance. An ordinance is a thing agreed upon, arranged, ordained. Now, churches, of every kind, are accustomed to make their own ordinances, and on no other ground than that there is need for them. The highest churches in the world—and I take it that what are called High Churches are the most grovelling—the highest churches in the world, as well as all other churches, are obliged to have human ordinances. And the more they try not to have them, the more they find that they must have them. Can the world grow eighteen hundred years, and have no needs and necessities more than it had at the beginning? Why, what kind of a doctrine is that which teaches that the acorn of one year's growth has all that the oak is permitted to have after a hundred years? By the law of growth and development, churches need and create more and more ordinances.

“What, for example, is more universal than a Sunday school? Show me the text, if you can, in the New Testament for the ordinance of the Sunday school. And show me a church that has any life in it, that will permit you to put down the Sunday school. And if you ask, ‘Where is your authority?’ I reply that God gives every church and every man the right to do everything that is good; and that in this fact is my only authority. The whole economy of the printing-press is an ordinance. It is a *Christian* ordinance; for now the printing-press is just as much an ordained preacher as a minister of the Gospel. The imposition of types is just as much a Christian ordinance as the imposition of hands. The Church employs it. But it was not known in antiquity. Neither were Sunday schools known then. All societies for the promotion of morals are Christian ordinances, and, when under the wing of the Church, are ecclesiastical ordinances; and no man thinks there is any impropriety in calling them such. But where is your text for them? If anybody asks me, ‘Where is your text for baptising children?’ I reply that there is none. And if I am asked, ‘Then why do you baptise them?’ I say, because it is found to be beneficial. And if men say to

me, 'Do you think the baptism of children is a Divine ordinance?' my reply is, that I believe an ox-yoke is a Divine ordinance. When men found out that shaping a piece of wood across the neck of the ox was the way to get the use of his strength, that piece of wood became a Divine ordinance. God made the nature of things, and human skill only finds it out. You never invented anything. You have discovered a great many things; and the things you have discovered are Divine, only some are so irreverent that they do not look upon them as such."

The unconventional and unecclesiastical character of the foregoing remarks will doubtless startle a few Conservative Christians; but the question occurs to us: Wherein lies the fallacy of the argument itself? Is it not a sound argument, and one that commends itself to our common sense? It may not harmonise with our preconceived notions, but does it contradict the Scriptures? It is high time that we should look upon these matters, not in the light of tradition, but in the light of the Word of God and of reason. The sum and substance of Mr. Beecher's teaching seems to be this:—Ordinances of every description are divinely established if they are useful and beneficial. But are we to put baptism and the Lord's Supper among other ordinances? Does no higher sanctity belong to these than to Sunday schools and such-like recent ordinances? The Lord's Supper was instituted by the Master Himself before His death; and we know that He commanded His disciples to go forth into the world both to preach and to administer baptism: are these two Sacraments to be called human ordinances? Is it not incontrovertible that they are, to say the very least, more *directly* divine than all others? We sympathise very much with the remark that all good and useful things are of God; but is it not beyond dispute that some things bear a diviner stamp than others? The Lord's Supper has come down from the Saviour Himself, and so has baptism. There is a direct command in relation to both. And Mr. Beecher would not deny this. His supreme concern, however, is to teach people to regard God as parent of *all* worthy and commendable institutions and ordinances. But let us see what Mr. Beecher has to say about the Sacraments.

In a sermon on "Infant Baptism" we find these remarks:—"The ordinance and act of baptism is simply declaratory. It declares a fact, that is all. It does not make a change, nor seek to make a change. The Lord's Supper, on the other hand, is wholly undemonstrative. It has reference, primarily and mainly, to the recipient's own state of mind. It is the act of communion with, and plight to Christ. But baptism is simply a sign or symbol set forth to the world. It has very little to do with the man, directly or indirectly. It is an act declaratory to other people, as the Lord's Supper is an act declaratory to the partaker. Baptism is merely a lesson read, or a fact declared to spectators. The effect of baptism is for those that witness it. Baptism signifies to the world that the subject of it is cleansed in heart by God's Spirit; or that he thinks himself to be thus cleansed; or that he is thought to be. It expresses the idea that one lives, or is striving to live, heart-clean. What does washing the body signify, but that men do not like dirt, and that they are striving to live a cleanly life? And what washing is to the body that baptism is to the soul. The attempting to live heart-clean by the washing of the Holy Ghost, as by the washing of water we attempt to live body-clean—that is baptism. We wash the body every day for cleansing. It does not imply that we are never soiled, but that we do not like to be; and we wash the body day by day, and so maintain our cleanliness. In like manner we maintain heart-cleanliness by avoiding evil. We avoid not only outward evil, but evil thoughts, evil feelings, and evil imaginations. We cleanse our hearts by casting out the iniquity that is in us, and going to God for forgiveness, and receiving His pardon. And baptism is the mere sign and declaration to the world that the subject of it is being cleansed in heart by the Divine Spirit—or that he thinks he is."

He then goes on to explain the difference between adult and infant baptism. "In an adult this cleansing is Divine, but is co-operative with the human will, and is accompanied with confession of sin and renunciation of evil. A child is baptised to the same effect—namely, the cleansing of the heart by the Spirit of God; but since a child has not yet gone wrong, and is in a sweet and heavenly state, it has no

sins to confess and no evils to renounce; and in its case baptism signifies, not only that its heart is clean, but that its cleanliness is to be continued by the Spirit of God. But baptism does not affect the child. If you are a merchant, what you write over your door does not affect the goods which you have to sell, though it tells the world what those goods are. If a man has devastating drugs, and puts up a sign signifying what they are, the sign does not produce any effect upon the drugs themselves, though it informs those outside of what is inside. If it be a ministration of mercy that is within, the sign outside signifying the fact makes no difference with the thing itself, though it serves to advertise the passer-by respecting it. Baptism, in the case of an adult, is a sign that the subject of it has renounced his sin, and is living for heart-cleanliness; and, in the case of a child, it is a declaration made in behalf of the child that it is clean. Besides, it means in the case of a child that the parent says, 'I am to bring it up so that, by the continual cleansing of the Holy Ghost, it shall grow up in Christian nurture and admonition.' But in either case it means the same thing—namely, the work of God upon the heart."

His views on the Lord's Supper are the same as those entertained by all orthodox ministers. He looks upon it as a memorial of the Redeemer's sacrifice, a kind of keepsake which the Master gave to His disciples on leaving them, by which they were to remember Him during His absence. But it is more than a memorial. It is also a bond of unity between all Christians. Very properly is it called *Communion*. It is symbolic of the soul's blessed communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, and also of the communion of saints. Christians are all brothers and sisters sitting down at the board with their Heavenly Father as host. Officiating at the table, Mr. Beecher once made use of these beautiful words:—"As bells answer bells, and strike with sweet collision in the air, so may heart answer heart, and joy answer joy, upon this wedding-day, when those who are affianced to God are openly united to Him in holy communion."

The Lord's Supper is a symbol of that continual communion with Christ which it is the privilege of the Christian

to enjoy. There should be no break in the soul's intercourse with Him. On this point Mr. Beecher remarks :—"A man who should sit down to the communion table, having bitterness against a brother in his heart, would he not do wrong? 'Yes,' you answer at once. But it is communion every day. The body of Christ is wherever human bodies are, and he who has any bitterness against a brother is always committing sacrilege."

Who has a right to administer the Sacrament? Anybody. He does not believe that a man *must* be an ordained minister before he can celebrate the Lord's Supper, or any other ordinance. It is right and proper that, in ordinary circumstances, the administration should be committed to the regular ministry, but there is no inherent necessity that it should be so entrusted. According to Mr. Beecher, any man—the pope, a cardinal, a priest, a dissenting minister, a layman, or any other Christian person may sit at the Lord's Table and dispense the sacred communion. "Or," he adds, "if you administer the Sacrament to yourself, it is just as good—the Lord's Supper belongs to every man that belongs to Christ, and he has as much right to administer it to himself as to have it administered to him by a priest." This may be novel teaching to many; but, before condemning it as heterodox, they ought to examine very seriously the foundations of their faith. Is it not a fact that the Sacrament is administered by an ordained minister simply because he has been appointed by the Church to do so, and not because he has received any special commission or right from the Lord? He is the Church's servant, doing that which every individual Christian has a *right* to do. Christ Himself gave no direction on this point, nor did any of His Apostles.

We subjoin the form of invitation to the Lord's Table which Mr. Beecher usually employs :—"After the blessing is pronounced we shall—a great many of us for the first time in our lives—unite joyfully together in participating in these emblems of the Saviour; and for my life I cannot, and never could, be sorry in taking them. I cannot help thinking of Christ as alive—not as dead. Though I think back, in the presence of these ceremonials, to His passion and

death, yet there is that in my nature and heart which always bounds from the darkness towards the light, from the defeat toward the triumph. And I rejoice when I take the broken body, because I think what that broken body has done. It has broken the power of sin, it has broken the power of the devil, it has broken the power of evil, in this world. That blood is shed; but oh! I do not think of the shedding. I think of the cleansing which it has wrought in every age, in so many nations, and of the power that it is yet to exert throughout all the world. Come, Christian brethren, all of you, with us to-day. Come every heart, whether belonging to the Church or not, that belongs to Christ, and that, in the consciousness of its own weakness and want, is willing to fly to Christ. To you belongs this service. To you belong its privileges. And I cordially invite you—every one who is a child of Christ—without ecclesiastical condition, and on this general ground. All that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, and are endeavouring to follow Him, are our brethren. Come, join with us in the celebration of His dying love.”

3. *Future Punishment.*—This is perhaps the most perplexing of all subjects at the present time. During the last few years it has been discussed with great ability and earnestness by many of our best Biblical scholars. This is not in the least surprising. The Bible is not merely a storehouse filled with theological facts, but also a deep mine in which men are to dig for richest treasures. The precious ore is always there, but it is hidden from view, and must be carefully dug for before it can be found and brought to the surface. Hence, in its interpretation of the Bible, the Church is progressive. She understands the doctrines of Christianity much more thoroughly to-day than she did a thousand years ago. The way of life is so simple and plain that a little child need not go astray; but the way of theology is beset with innumerable difficulties which we cannot remove, except very gradually. The main divisions of theology are Theology proper, Anthropology, Soteriology, and Eschatology. It took the Church some fifteen centuries to formulate her answers to such questions as these: Who and what is God? In what relation does He stand to the world? What

is sin, and to what extent is man enthralled by it? Who is the Redeemer, and what is the nature of the work done by Him? Having once obtained clear and definite views on those high themes, the Church proceeded to consider the practical inquiry of the ages—"How then can a man be justified with God?" The Protestant Reformation answered, By faith alone. This answer came at the proper time, when there was the greatest need for it. Indulgencies were sold by thousands; men sinned and were pardoned for money; sinners were saved for so much per head; but God raised mighty men, such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and others, who, moved by the Holy Ghost, declared that indulgencies were utterly useless, that no man could be saved by paying down so much money; that Heaven's only method of justifying and pardoning guilty souls was by faith in the precious blood of Christ. Thus we see that every age has its own truths to discover and to enforce, and that the Church has been always advancing theologically in a logical and necessary order. She could not have begun with that which comes in late in the order of nature. She could not have understood the doctrine of justification by faith till she had formed correct and clear conceptions of those truths which are fundamental and causal in their relation to all else; such as the Existence of God, the Trinity, the Person and Work of the Saviour, the Fall, and other cognate truths. The same remarks apply to the subject of Eschatology. In the nature of things, Eschatology cannot possibly precede Anthropology and Soteriology, because our theories of the former must be based, to a large extent, upon our theories of the latter. Given a man's views of God, and of Christ and His atonement, it would not be difficult to make a correct guess at his opinions respecting the life to come. It would seem, therefore, that the problem set before theologians of the present age is to ascertain what the Bible teaches on Eschatology, especially on that branch of Eschatology relating to future punishment.

When we say that every century has its own work to do, its own doctrines to unfold, it is not to be understood that all other doctrines are for the time altogether thrown aside, but simply that they are not in the fore-front. From the

beginning of time men have been anxiously questioning about their destiny in the hereafter; and throughout the Christian era different views have been entertained. These may be said to be four in number, namely:—

(1.) The *orthodox* view, or the view generally held in the Christian Church of the past. This theory teaches that every man's destiny is unalterably fixed at death, or, in other words, that heaven is the *final* state of the blessed and hell the *final* state of the wicked.

(2.) *Restorationism*, or, as it is often called, Universalism. This is the view that all men will be ultimately saved. A great many modern divines are inclined to espouse this theory, at least in the form of a vague, longing hope. Certainly, it is a most cheering theory. What more natural to human feelings than this intense yearning of the poet?—

“Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Shall be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood.

“That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish in the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.”

(3.) *Conditional Immortality*, formerly known as Annihilationism, which teaches that some time in the future the wicked will be destroyed, or annihilated.

(4.) *Purgatory*,—the view that the souls which are capable of salvation spend the time between death and the judgment undergoing a remedial, purifying punishment or chastisement. The advocates of this notion believe, however, that multitudes of mankind shall be consigned to *endless* torment.

It is difficult to know which of these four views predominates at the present time. It is indisputable that the orthodox theory is being very earnestly assailed from all quarters, and that the attack comes from within the ranks of orthodoxy as well as from without. It is whispered abroad that the number of those who have the courage to stand up in their pulpits and preach an old-fashioned hell is exceedingly small. At any rate, no one can deny that the

majority of ministers no longer believe in wounding the sensibilities and exciting the disgust of their hearers by drawing graphic and shocking pictures of the torments of the lost. In how many pulpits is the following verse repeated in our day?—

“ ‘For ever’ is written on their racks,
‘For ever’ on their chains;
‘For ever’ burneth in the fire,
‘For ever’ ever reigns.”

Or where is the minister who would address his unbelieving hearer in such words as these:—“Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God, and it shall be written, ‘For ever!’ When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torments they shall say, ‘For ever!’ When they howl, echo cries, ‘For ever!’” Such ghastly pictures, such vivid delineations of the horrible, do not prevail in our modern pulpits. But what reason can we assign for such a wonderful change? Do we no longer *believe* the doctrine of *endless* punishment, or are we too cowardly to express our convictions? It is not necessary to suppose either the one or the other, for it is possible to believe a doctrine and not preach it. No man is called upon to preach all his beliefs. Many there are who fail to find the doctrine of *endless* torment anywhere in the sacred book; and it would be absurd for them to teach it in their sermons. But there are others who, though they are convinced of the *truth* of the doctrine, cannot see either the necessity or even the expediency of proclaiming it. Mr. Beecher has again and again been charged with glaring inconsistency in his public teaching on this awful subject. To-day he both believes and preaches the tenet of everlasting punishment; to-morrow he denies it, and holds it up to ridicule—so runs the accusation.

At one period he did preach it in the most solemn and impressive manner. In a very able and tender sermon, delivered some time before 1868, having asserted that all who die in infancy are saved, he makes the following touching remarks:—“But has this salvation a wider scope than infant children? Are there any others who will experience the grace of Him whom they never knew? Let those answer who seem to know so much, who have searched out God’s whole

government, and know all about it. I say, I do not know. I yearn, and hope, and long; but I do not know. As in the case of infants, the benefit of Christ's atonement is applied to their unknowing souls, so I hope there are earnest and conscientious men; to whom no gospel ever came, who will yet be made subjects of redemptive love. May we not hope that that which came to us through Jesus Christ, clear and disclosed as the noonday sun, may have fallen with reflex beams upon others before His day and since? And as we are led by the Morning Star or the Sun of Righteousness, may they not, at least, have had some twilight leading? But for *you*, to whom the Gospel is preached; for you, upon whose cradle rested the dew of grace, and whose earliest years were made acquainted with the sacred name of Jesus—the children of pious parents, reared within sound of the sanctuary, never beyond the sound of the Sabbath bell; surrounded and hedged in by ten thousand influences of religion, persuading the understanding, importunate upon the conscience—for such as *you*, if Christ be rejected, there is no salvation! For those who never heard Him; to whom no sweet sound of the Gospel ever came; whose work was one long rolling surge, unbroken by the tranquil shore of any Sabbath, and who in this darkness and neglect yet always groped upward, endeavouring to live a life better than their times, yearning and longing to know a better way—may we not hope, in the inscrutable mystery of Divine wisdom, that there was some mode of applying to such the benefit of the death of Christ? that the vision rose, at last, upon their eye, cleansed from the films of flesh? and that among the myriad voices of heaven there are some from the heathen world who, though on earth they could give no name to that after which their souls yearned and searched, no sooner beheld the divine glory of the Saviour than they cried out, 'This is He for whom we have waited?' Yes, I firmly believe that it is by the power of Christ that every man is saved who shall touch the shore of heaven; but I am not authorised to say that God cannot, in the sovereignty of his love, conduct men who are in darkness to that salvation which we reject, and give them a reflected light, at least, of that glory which shines full on us. But for all those who

have been clearly taught, who have been moved by their wicked passions deliberately to set aside Him of whom the Prophets spake, whom the Apostles more clearly taught, whom the Holy Spirit, by the divine power, now makes known to the world through the Gospel—for them, if they reject their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. If they deliberately neglect, set aside, or reject their Saviour, He will as deliberately, in the end, reject them.”

Is not that the old, orthodox view in all its fulness and purity? It is the doctrine of everlasting misery for all those who die having deliberately rejected the Saviour. Listen again:—“Sometimes, in the dark caves, men have gone to the edge of unspeaking precipices, and wondering what was the depth, have cast down fragments of rock, and listened for the report of the fall, that they might judge how deep that blackness was; and listening—still listening—no sound returns; no sudden splash, no clinking stroke as of rock against rock—nothing but silence, utter silence! And so I stand upon the precipice of life. I sound the depths of the other world with curious inquiries. But from it comes no echo and no answer to my questions. No analogies can grapple and bring up from the depths of the darkness of the lost world the probable truths. No philosophy has line and plummet long enough to sound the depths. There remains for us only the few authoritative and solemn words of God. These declare that the bliss of the righteous is everlasting; and, with equal directness and simplicity, they declare that the doom of the wicked is everlasting.” Again:—“Dear friend, I must be faithful to your soul. You and I will meet before long at the judgment-seat of God. You shall not be left in doubt as to whether I think sin is damnable. I stand here to declare to every one of you that, whatever hope there may have been for men who lived before the Gospel was known upon earth, and whatever hope there may be for the heathen, to whom the Gospel has not been carried, there is in the Gospel of Christ no hope and revelation for you to whom Christ has been preached, and to whom all the avenues of salvation have been opened, if, having counted the blood of the atonement an unholy thing, and having trampled it under your feet, you die unbelieving.”

Surely it is orthodoxy. He adhered to this view as late as October 1870, when he preached a sermon from Matt. xxv., 46, in which, after defining hell as a state rather than a place, he declared that nothing but dark spiritual night awaits those who die impenitent. What was his authority for such a statement? "The direct, simple testimony of Christ." "Christ says so—that is all." But in April 1872, a sermon was preached in Plymouth Church which was afterwards scattered broadcast throughout the country, and created tremendous excitement in all quarters. Many sincere Christians were greatly pained by it, and pronounced the preacher a teacher of universalism. The burden of the sermon was that God, our Father, did not create any man for future torment; that He desires the salvation of every man, and is infinitely grieved when any of His children refuse the ministry of love and pardon. As it is very essential to understand aright his position, we will make a few extracts:—

"There be those who teach that God acts supremely for His own glory. That you can put a construction upon this which will disabuse it of its first and apparent meaning, I know. It may be that God's glory consists in the welfare of His creatures, and that therefore He reigns for His own glory. With such an interpretation as that the sentiment has the heartiest approval of every soul which is susceptible of moral convictions and intuitions. But that has not always been the interpretation given to it.

"All that in me which is the 'fruit of the Spirit' rebels against a transfer to God of qualities which I have been trained to hate in men! I will not worship a malign deity. I will not pray 'Thy kingdom come' to a being who is represented as doing things which the worst tyrant that ever lived to torment men could not have surpassed. Such a being is not a God. It is a hideous fiction—an ideal idol, which every sane and good man should help to cast down. Hear theology saying: 'By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.' Is God, then, One whom in calm council with Himself determined to create multitudes

of men on purpose that they might sin, and that they might suffer for sinning, and that for ever? Did He organise men to produce sin just as the loom is built to produce textile fabrics, just as the engine is built to develop and utilise power? Did He build them that they should answer the ends of creation by suffering for ever and ever?

“Look at chapter third, from the Confession of Faith of the Saybrook Platform, adopted by the Congregational churches and ministers of Connecticut, 1708. It is with a few variations identical with what is called the Savoy Confession, or one agreed upon at a conference of bishops and dissenting ministers held at the Savoy, London, 1661. The Savoy is almost identical with the Westminster Confession, formed in 1643 and ratified by Parliament 1690. It was approved and made part of the Cambridge Platform by the Congregational ministers and churches of New England, 1648—a few years only after its promulgation. The Westminster Confession is also the Confession of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, and is subscribed, entirely or ‘for substance of doctrine,’ by every licentiate of the church.

“I am not finding fault with the doctrine of Decrees, but only with the one special decree, namely, the foreordination of men to eternal damnation. I am not arguing the question of the reality and justice of eternal future punishment, as that dogma is held by orthodox churches. For evangelical churches, at least in our day, declare that men have sinned wilfully, needlessly, against light and dissuasion; that God neither openly nor secretly desired it, or desires their punishment; that even after the transgression He earnestly interposed recuperative influences, sincerely offered, and within the reach and compliance of every man to whom the Gospel comes. Now, the representation of God in the chapter upon Decrees is totally irreconcilable with such views. It represents God as having for some secret purpose, in which His interest was to be promoted, predestinated some men to an eternity of joy and other men to an eternity of wretchedness, and that the decree had in it the imperativeness of absolute fate; it executed itself with such

irresistibleness that the number of either kind cannot be decreased or diminished."

Of course many of us will assert that in the foregoing remarks he utterly and shamefully misinterprets the Westminster Confession; but evidently the clause in question *allows* of such a construction. He proceeds:—"We do not doubt that pain is a moral element, and that penalty is consistent with Divine love. But the creation of suffering for its own sake, or the ordination of men to suffering without regard to its benevolent effects, and still more, an idea of *justice* which punishes men for acting according to the creative will of their Maker, and of a *glory* which would be illustrated by ordaining men to an eternity of torment without foresight of good or evil in them, can proceed from nothing less than a demoniac nature. If one's imagination can sustain him while he flies along the equatorial line of despair following the endless circle of but one single soul, that had been made to be a vessel of wrath, had been ordained to sin, and then had been passed by, and ordained to dishonour and wrath, 'to the praise of His glorious justice,' he would cry out in an ecstasy of righteous indignation against such monstrous and immoral notions of Deity! To worship such a Creator would be impiety. To hold up such a view to love and reverence is to insult the moral sense which has been rooted in the gospel. Such a God is only not manifested in Christ Jesus, but sits over against the exquisite beauty of His revelation of God as hell itself sits over against heaven. If such views were believed, and widely spread, it would authorise and justify every species of despotism in human government, and make the spread of Christian ideas of justice and self-sacrifice impossible!

"The representation of God made in the chapter on Decrees, in the Westminster Confession, is not less blasphemous because honestly framed. If held as High Calvinists hold it, it is an attack upon the sanctity of God and upon the moral sense of mankind. If it be softened by explanations, and illustrated by other parts of the Confession, as is done by Low Calvinism, it still can never be brought into agreement with that idea of God which Jesus

Christ came into the world to reveal. Consider what a crime against universal justice and universal benevolence it would be for God to connive at the eternal loss of a single soul, if He by any means could have prevented it! But what shall be said if He planned that ruin; if He called it justice; if He proclaimed the feat as glorious? Have you ever deeply pondered what it is to be lost? To be shut out from all joy, from the society of all that are good, to be herded with the offscouring of the universe, to increase in the capacity of suffering, through ages that travel for ever, and never draw near to the end of their journey?

"Consider only one being, one single soul, carried on for ever, growing huger and huger, bloated with anguish, pressing forward, swelling the latitude and longitude of wails that for ten thousand years had shaken with horror the expanse, and which yet were so much less than the later wails that they seemed like music in comparison! Consider the rolling of the vast orb of damnation with a single soul down through countless infinities of years! The conception of one soul being lost fills every sentient heart with paralysis of despair—with unutterable anguish. Do not tell me that God created one soul on purpose to damn it; that He sat and thought of it, and said, 'I will do it,' and started it on its hideous way of wailing and sinning and sorrowing, and wailing and sinning and sorrowing, and wailing and sinning and sorrowing—for ever and for ever—do not tell me this, and then ask me to turn round and say, 'Our Father.'

"Could there be a heaven if it was known there that beneath their feet one single creature was travelling an eternal road of woe for which he had been expressly created? Praise would be dumb; chill distrust would creep upon confidence.

"What, then, if not simply one single solitary being were moving in an eternal pilgrimage of woe along the infernal marl, but for ages there had been moving thither a huge caravan—a myriad of victims! What could be thought of a sovereign who organised pain, not as a sanction of government, but who created beings for infinite pain in order to bring out some quality in Himself called—by what strange transmutation of words I know not—Justice and Glory!

If the astounding views of God prevail that are contained in this immortally infamous chapter, and which deeply colour the preaching of even those that would give them the mildest significance, then we must believe that a world is continued in existence to pour an incessant flood of souls into that eternal anguish for which they were expressly foreordained. The work is going on in every generation. It will go on. It is known. It was foreseen. It was planned and ordained. The army of the black banner must already be incalculable. It is still mustering. Under the broad canopy of blackness and darkness still troop onward these creatures whom God created expressly that He might manifest His glory in their damnation !”

All Christians will agree with Mr. Beecher in his scathing denunciation of the doctrine in question, but there are great multitudes who will think that he is opposing and denouncing a theory which does not exist. There are no supralapsarians in our day. Had Mr. Beecher studied the subject historically before the delivery of his wonderful discourse, he would have discovered that the overwhelming majority of the eminent divines composing the Westminster Assembly were pronounced opponents of the view he refutes and laughs to scorn. Twiss, the Prolocutor of that distinguished body, was a firm and zealous supralapsarian ; but he was about the only one. It is not fair, therefore, to explain the Westminster Confession in such a way as to make it the teacher of a tenet which we know was not the tenet of those who framed the Confession. It is not fair to hold up as an object of scorn and contempt a notion that is non-existent, or nearly so. It is not fair to entertain a congregation of three thousand intelligent people with exaggerated, caricatured delineations of a doctrine which has long been dead, and which was never held, in its best days, except by a miserably small minority. We do not imagine that Mr. Beecher would *intentionally* misrepresent any body of men ; but in this case we are bound to affirm that he did unwittingly misrepresent the largest and most highly-respected denominations of our times. What Presbyterians, and the majority of Congregationalists, and Baptists, and Episcopalians *do* teach and *have always* taught, is that *what*

the Almighty does in time He did from all eternity intend to do. Mr. Beecher himself maintains that if a man deliberately rejects Christ and dies unbelieving, there is no hope for him. Now if God consigns an incorrigible sinner to everlasting punishment, is it so very unreasonable to suppose that, being omniscient, He did decree in the far back eternity that such a doom should befall such a character? Does the memorable clause in the Westminster Confession, when charitably and historically construed, affirm more than that?

But we must proceed. So far Mr. Beecher has not uttered a word against the theory of everlasting punishment, but has himself taught it in positive terms. Here is another passage inspired by the same belief:—"The thought of the future punishment for the wicked which the Bible reveals is enough to make an earthquake of terror in every man's soul. I do not accept the doctrine of everlasting punishment because I delight in it. I would cast in doubts, if I could, till I had filled hell up to the brim. I would destroy all faith in it; but that would do me no good; I could not destroy the thing. Nor does it help me to take the word 'everlasting,' and put it into a rack, like an inquisitor, until I make it shriek out some other meaning; I cannot alter the stern fact." But he *has* taken the word "everlasting," and put it into a rack, and forced it to shriek out another meaning. Listen:—

"I admit that as it stands in our English version, and read through the medium of our own education, the Scripture apparently teaches the old doctrine. But when the terms 'hell,' 'damnation,' and 'everlasting' are subjected to the crucial test of modern scholarship they do not bear out the old meaning. I doubt whether in the days of the Old Testament, or in the Jewish mind at the time of our Saviour, the sharp, metaphysically accurate idea of time and duration existed. I believe that what they meant by 'eternal' was a vague and nebulous period of time, and that it was not used in a sharp, scientific sense, but in a poetic, or, rather, in a generalising sense; just as we say 'a hundred' when we only mean 'many,' or as we say 'for ever' when we mean simply long periods of time.

And on this subject there has been an immeasurable change in the attitude of thinking men within the few past generations. It is universally conceded that men do not any longer, even the most orthodox, preach the doctrine of endless suffering as it was preached fifty or even twenty-five years ago. To that effect there has certainly been a great change. Other motives have been employed, and the emphasis that once was placed upon fear is transferred now to hope and a sense of duty; and, even when men do preach the doctrine, it is taught philosophically and not Scripturally. The vivid figures of Scripture are no longer whirled around the pulpit like a ball of fire. It is usually an apologetic argument; it is an attempt to justify the Divine administration, and to do this men fall back on the desert of sin, and the necessity of punishment for the integrity of the moral universe. It is true that just now the pulpits on every side are beginning to show their hands and to preach the doctrine; but if any man will compare the sermons that are now preached with those of Jonathan Edwards or of Hopkins, or indeed with any of the fathers of New England, or of the Presbyterian divines of Princeton, he will see how great a change has come over those who still persist in believing in literal, eternal, conscious suffering. They are as unlike as the summer morning's dew is to the tornado in mid-winter.

"I hold as strongly as ever to the doctrine of retribution, that right and wrong are not transient in their nature, but eternal. I hold that obedience and disobedience will for ever produce their corresponding pleasure or pain. I hold that if, in the life to come, men persist in the violation of the laws of their being, they will unquestionably suffer pain and penalty; but there is no evidence whatever that they will, and there are many presumptions that they will not. I do not think that it can be shown to be a Scriptural doctrine that probation closes with death. In another life I can conceive that the experience of this life, which, by reason of man's physical environments and social influences, has not wrought reformation or virtue, may yet, in another sphere and under more favourable circumstances, bring men to a very much higher platform and standpoint of conduct

and of character. We have reason to suppose that pain and suffering, which in this world are of an educating nature, will have a stronger educating force hereafter, and that they will be continued as long as there is hope of benefit in them. But on all this subject I would say—first, that probation does not close with death; second, that the end and aim of retribution is, in the first instance, the reformation of the individual and the safety of society round about him. The continuance of suffering, after it is hopeless in respect to the individual and needless in respect to society, is simply cruelty, and I cannot conceive of any man of a deeply moral and reflective nature who would bring himself to believe that God will bring into life, as He has, myriads which utterly outrun all computation, under circumstances in which they not only have no help whatsoever to effect moral growth, but where all their surroundings are adverse and perverse, and allow them to continue under such known conditions, to reproduce generations innumerable, and then to place them in a great hereafter where the principal feature is suffering, and where suffering has ceased to have any moral benefit, and so continue them there for ever and for ever. This is to create a department of the universe for the purpose simply of suffering; but needless suffering is cruelty, and any being who inflicts needless suffering is tyrannical.”

As to whether the doctrine is believed as a fact, and not merely as an idea and part of a system, Mr. Beecher speaks as follows:—“I do not believe that many men could calmly measure the nature of a single soul, and its susceptibilities to suffering, and the power of Almighty God to create suffering in that soul, and of a continued existence only for the purposes of suffering through illimitable ages, for ever and for ever, and then multiply that soul until there are no materials left on which to inscribe the figures, until the swarming myriads defy all measurement or conception of the imagination; then, overhanging the mighty abyss, contemplate the writhing anguish, the screaming agony, the hideous and loathsome suffering, the brutal indignities of sulphurous demons, the carnival of animalism, and yet be able to turn and utter the first words of the Lord’s Prayer,

‘Our Father!’ Neither is the trouble alleviated by saying that the penalties are not material anguish, but that they are the torments of conscience, of anguish, and despair. While we revolt at physical torment, the refined and cultured nature learns to estimate mental suffering as even more exquisite and more horrible than mere bodily torment; and to teach an eternity of conscious mental suffering, after all chance of hope or reformation is gone, shocks that true moral sense which has been created and educated by the example and the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. In short, the very nature of the atonement, as an evolution of the inferior love-nature of God, condemns and destroys such a vision of future useless eternal punishment as a nightmare vision of barbarism. I can conceive, therefore, how a man may believe it simply as an idea. In part of a system it is a mere logical abstraction. But how a man can look in the face of a dying child, the sweet daughter of his hope, cut off without any evidence of change; how one can look into society and see that nineteen out of twenty are not in those conditions which his system of theology requires precedent to heaven and salvation, and yet live and be happy, eat, drink, sleep, laugh, jest, drink in the light of the sun, the glory of the springtime, walk in a rapture through summer, and believe this doctrine, I cannot conceive. When I look at it in the light of palpitating human life, if I believed in this doctrine every leaf would waft a sigh; the ground would tremble with the imagined thunders of perdition; I would be clothed in sackcloth; my head would become with the prophet’s ‘a fountain of tears;’ it would stop all the processes of human society; it would say to every man who entered upon the married state, ‘Thou art a barbarian, to bring into life children under such fearful peril and risk!’ I do not believe that the reason, nor the industries of life, nor the sanctities of the household, nor anything that is gracious and good could long survive a real belief in these hideous doctrines.”

Referring to the history of the doctrine of future punishment, he agrees with what Canon Farrar has advanced in his book entitled “Eternal Hope,” as well as with the statements of many other modern scholars who have written on

the subject, and says:—"During the first four hundred years the three theories of restoration, of annihilation of the wicked, and of the eternal punishment of the wicked, were held indifferently in the primitive Church, and no man's orthodoxy was called in question on that ground. Of the first six schools of theology it has been shown that four of them taught the final restoration of mankind, and it has also been shown that these very schools comprised the missionary and revival men of that age; so that the energetic portion of the primitive Church that spread Divine truth were restorationists. That the men who wrote and thought in the Greek language, and who lived nearest to the times of the apostles, did not consider the New Testament as teaching the final, conscious suffering of the wicked, forms a strong presumption against the accuracy of the modern interpretation of the New Testament. The general drift of the New Testament is that a sinful life and character brings men into terrible perils in the future. But that those perils are precisely such as men have taught, and that they are endless in respect to each individual who passes unrepentant out of life, cannot be deduced from the general spirit of the New Testament. I teach that sin is both a shame and a disgrace in this life, and an exceeding peril in the life to come, and that there are elements enough of fear to rouse up the consciences of men who need the coarse stimulant of fear to induce any moral reflection or reformation."

But if scholars, who know their Greek and their mental and moral philosophy, no longer believe in the theory of endless, conscious torment in hell, what about the plain, unlettered man who has to read his Bible in a translation? Would he derive from the New Testament the idea of future, eternal, endless misery? Mr. Beecher answers as follows:—"Yes; just as the old Jews naturally inferred from the Old Testament that the Messiah was to be a temporal prince rather than a spiritual force, and yet they were wrong; just as the disciples believed that Jesus would come again in their lifetime, and that they should not see death until the kingdom of God had come in a physical and literal sense, and yet they were wrong; just as many good men still believe in the second advent into this world of

Christ, and of the transformation of all society relations by the coercive power of His omnipotence. In short, the universal tendency has been to materialise the Scripture; to create a material hell and a material heaven; to bring to bear upon the ineffable themes of spiritual existence the attributes and laws of time, and matter, and space. 'The kingdom of heaven,' Christ said, 'is within us;' it is not a physical state; it is a condition of the soul. The kingdom of darkness is a spiritual condition, and heaven and hell are words which cover the psychologic condition of the universe. Plain men naturally tend to literalise and materialise the figures of the New Testament; all the worse for them, for the Master declared, 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, they are life.'"

Far be it from us to blame Mr. Beecher for this total change of opinion. It is the duty of every man to keep his mind open to any new light that may break out upon him from the holy Word. That a certain notion has been held for centuries by the great majority of the ablest and most godly men, is in itself no proof that it is contained in the Bible. Are we, of this nineteenth century, to be the slaves of the past eighteen hundred years? Are we to be for ever tied to the apron strings of orthodoxy? Have we no liberty? A man who is afraid to contradict Augustine, or Anselm, or Calvin, or Arminius, or Wesley, is not worthy of life. The Bible should be our only authoritative confession of faith; and if, by studying and pondering the sacred page, a new light surprises us, we should not shrink back and attempt to hide ourselves behind the former darkness, as if we had no right to discover that of which our fathers were ignorant. When the new light broke upon him, Mr. Beecher did wisely to welcome it. He was always anxious to entertain a benevolent faith on this exalted theme, but his honesty prevented him from teaching a doctrine which he did not find in the New Testament. Now, however, he does entertain the "larger hope," and is not afraid to declare the fact. We have no sympathy whatever with those heartless critics who claim that since Eve obeyed the devil and ate the apple, nothing has been more astounding or foolhardy than Mr. Beecher's change of opinion.

They who still adhere to the old view may feel very sorry to see a great and influential man forsaking it, but certainly they should give him the credit of possessing a conscience as well as themselves. Is it sinful to feel and to say, in the words of the poet—

“I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope”?

The new faith may not be true; but who has the authority to assure us that the old dogma is a correct interpretation of Scripture? Are we not all equally human and equally fallible? We cannot say that we accept Mr. Beecher's new doctrine; but we claim the right to inquire, with deepest solicitude, in the language of Tennyson—

“The wish that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?”

To dogmatise in such a region as this would be blasphemous. The future is wrapped in the sable shroud of mystery. It is the land of dead silence and impenetrable darkness. The massive gates swing open in a mysterious, inexplicable manner; the dead pass in, the gates close again, and nothing more is known. Everywhere there are intense listenings, plaintive questionings, anxious inquirings, but the Great Beyond maintains its painful silence. Many there are who knock at the gates, and knock again, calling the while to their loved ones within—“Where are ye? Whither gone? In what state?” But no response comes back; the silence is not broken, the darkness is not pierced. Out of the millions upon millions who pass in from day to day, and age to age, not one has ever returned to tell the story. All we know about the dread hereafter is, that it is inhabited by two classes of beings, one class being in happiness and the other in unutterable misery. Beyond that we dare *affirm* absolutely nothing. We cannot see eye to eye with those who *confidently* preach “the larger hope.” By so doing they are assuming a terrible responsibility. So far

as we are aware, Mr. Beecher does not *teach* the doctrine of possible restoration for those who in this life wilfully reject the offer of salvation through Christ. The Bible does not *state* that such a restoration is possible. It *may* be ; who knows ? It behoves even the most confident of restorationists to speak with bated breath, saying only, with the poet—

“Behold we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.
“So runs my dream ; but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry.”





CHAPTER VII.

THE PULPIT AND POLITICS.

CHRISTIANITY, in its inmost essence, is neither a system of abstract doctrines nor a collection of philosophical principles or logical propositions, but a moral force brought into being for the sole purpose of inspiring the human heart with noble impulses and holy aspirations. It is a religion whose great, central object is to make man perfect and symmetrical in all the different parts of his life. Its aims are eminently simple and practical. Its characteristic products are holiness, truth, virtue. It always looks, with a keen, unflinching eye, towards goodness or character. It is a huge mistake to suppose that the chief design of the Gospel is to deliver men from the punishment of sin, and prepare them for an eternity of bliss beyond the grave. It certainly does secure these precious blessings for all who come under its power; but its first and, we were almost going to say, only *object* is to qualify us for the discharge of the manifold duties of the life that now is, having in the background, as it were, the promise of the life that is to come. We are delivered from the dominion of sin that we may live unto God. Religion, then, produces right living, and, properly speaking, nothing more. It seeks to develop in us the elements of true manhood. To be a Christian is to be a man in the fullest sense of the term, possessing a complete, well-rounded character. Many there

are who imagine that they have got religion simply because they are members of the Church, and exhibit some degree of proficiency and regularity in the performance of their distinctively religious duties ; or, in other words, because they listen to sermons, and sit at the Lord's table, and go through a certain number of forms and ceremonies, and contribute so much of their substance towards the maintenance of sacred ordinances. To them religion is an affair of Sunday merely, to be put on and taken off with their Sunday clothes. But the Biblical conception of religion is essentially and in every point different from this. The Book lays its supreme stress upon character. It insists upon the strictest morality in all who profess the name of Christ. "God is light," it says, "and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." No man has got religion, therefore, unless religion has got him, and got him so thoroughly as to mould and colour his whole nature and conduct, and make him in every respect a better, holier man. A good Christian ought to be a good husband, a good father, a good neighbour, a good citizen, careful, on all occasions and in all circumstances, to honour and magnify the Divine Name.

This conception enables us to view life from a different standpoint, and it clothes life itself with a dignity that does not usually attach to it. It takes away from it all vulgarity and grossness, and exalts it in all its parts. In our common, unsanctified speech we make frequent use of the words *sacred* and *secular*, or *profane* ; but religion annihilates the secular or profane from our vocabulary, and pronounces all things sacred. Life is one, and every department of it should be holy, divine, consecrated. Prayer, preaching, hymns, music of all kinds, all earthly avocations, commerce, farming, all forms of manual labour—all things whatsoever that are pure, and honest, and true should be included in the sublime category of sacred things. Is not that the teaching of God in His Holy Word? In fact, is not the whole Bible a mighty protest against the secularisation of anything that bears upon its face the impress of truth and righteousness? We have not as yet attained to such a glorious state ; but

does not the trend of history encourage us in the hope that we shall soon find ourselves in it? Let us ponder these glowing words of the Hebrew prophet:—"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem, and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seethe therein; and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord." The world in which we live is God's sanctuary; and we are called upon to worship Him continually in this vast and glorious temple. Behind the counter, at the writing-desk, amid the wild tumult and confusion of the busy mart, at the political club, as well as in the family and the church, there should be an altar whereon to offer living sacrifices unto the Most High. God should be invited to preside over every form of human activity, so that the whole of life may be permeated by a subtle and sublime inspiration.

Hitherto religion has had a confined, narrow, and one-sided meaning, which has prevented it from exerting its full power and influence upon the world. It has been regarded as having to do exclusively with man's immortality. If in some way it made him feel comfortable at the prospect of death, if it enabled him to believe that God would give him unbounded felicity in the Unseen Holy, if it gave him courage to sing triumphantly in the midst of heavy trials and sore afflictions, it was thought to have fulfilled all its promises and exhausted all its blessings. Indeed, there are many among us now who are deluded by the thought that it is simply a specific against the fear of hell, and a prompter of the hope that lays hold of the promise of heaven. To be religious, then, means to travel in the assurance of hope towards a blissful immortality, to believe and trust in the forgiving mercy of God in Christ Jesus, and to think and meditate upon spiritual realities. This notion prevails to an alarming extent; but its whole tendency is to lead astray and degrade the men who hold it. Religion, in its original and proper sense, is as broad as humanity, touching and sanctifying life at every point, operating upon and through

every faculty of the soul, and giving tone and character to every action. It pervades the mind, and qualifies it for every function. Every duty which we are required to perform as members of society should be steeped in the spirit of religion. All work ought to be Christian work, and all sorts of duties religious duties. The making of a watch, the constructing of a steam-engine, the manufacturing of cloth and all other stuff, sowing and reaping, the attending to the myriad details of every-day life, the conducting of business in its innumerable branches and shapes—every one of these apparently secular and temporal duties should be so elevated, and hallowed, and etherealised as to stretch out into and irradiate the very eternities. Such infinite enlargement, such grand, majestic glorification of our otherwise small and dull human life, is not a delusive dream of the night, but a glorious possibility—yea, in millions of cases, an accomplished fact. Religion lifts everything into the realm of the infinite. It invites us to worship in the Temple of Immensity; and everything done in the atmosphere of this Sanctuary is at once baptised into the name of Eternity. There is now, then, nothing small, nothing mean, nothing secular—everything has eternal, infinite bearings and consequences: everything is transfigured, supernaturalised, and caused to shine with heavenly, God-like lustre, similar to that illumination observed in the days of yore on the Sacred Mount!

If men would believe in this universal applicability of religion, what a changed world we would soon have; what transformations, and upliftings, and purifications would almost at once be accomplished; what grand meanings and lofty inspirations would be instilled into the outmost and most insignificant forms of activity. The secular element would then be for ever banished from the universe. Even politics would be born again from above. A man could then go down to the hustings, and stand up there as a representative of the Almighty, gazing the while with uplifted, radiant countenance, into the unlimited spaces above, beyond! Voting would be transformed into an act of worship. A Voice would be heard continually whispering in every true man's ear, "What God hath cleansed, that call

not thou common." Oh! happy, blissful time, hasten on! On bended knees we are fervently praying and earnestly toiling for thy coming; and we know that thou art already being borne hitherward on the wings of celestial breezes!

It is to be feared, however, that the majority of Christian people are not yet ripe for such a state of things. They do not seem to know that life and life's concerns are capable of such a mighty transformation; that religion is in its very nature adapted to consecrate and magnify every thought, every word, and every action; that it is the very mission of Christianity to make God and God's character universally regent in the world. Their dream is that religion is one thing and morality another, quite distinct and different; that godliness concerns one department of life and politics another, the two departments being divided by a wall, the pulling down of which would be an act of sacrilege and blasphemy; that the spiritual and the natural, the heavenly and the earthly, the sacred and the secular should be kept carefully apart, as having nothing in common the one with the other; and that it is always a sign of degeneracy and apostacy when the Church tampers with the State and talks politics. Surely the dream is innocent of all substance and reality, but men are so fond of hugging their dreams that they will not so easily let go of this. There are ministers of the Gospel who would burn at the stake rather than have anything whatsoever to do with public or political questions. These savour so strongly of the world that only men of the world ought to be allowed to touch them; Christians do at their infinite peril.

Is it not time that the Church should shake itself from the dust and lift its voice like a trumpet against such fatal heresies? Are there no men within its bounds in whose hearts the fire of truth burns with such intensity as to compel them to make a firm stand for the honour of Religion? Has no one the courage to speak out against the superstitious irreverence and false pietism of these modern times? The supreme cry of the age is for men of profound earnestness and bold hearts, who will venture out into the streets and lanes of the wide world and preach a gospel of all-reaching and all-conquering power—men of catholic views, and broad sympathies, and intrepid, dauntless heroism, who have

enough of God in them to enable them to endure the biting insult and scorching disdain of a thankless generation, and to work ever more in the sweetness of love, proclaiming the everlasting law of righteousness, and the great, glad ministry of salvation and truth. The Church of Jesus Christ is all-embracing and all-including. Some look upon it as if it were but a part of the State, under the regulation and always at the bidding of the State, whereas, in reality, it is the State that is a part of the Church. Instead of saying that the Church is included in the State, we would hold that the State ought to be a Church-member, subject to Church discipline and restraint. The most hopeless of all objects is an unbaptised, unregenerate, godless Government, left to follow its own impulses and the dictates of its own half-crucified conscience. Some are arguing earnestly for a separation between Church and State, on the ground that the Church would prosper better apart from the State; but the question comes, are they not sufficiently separated already? Can they be further apart than they are at present? The truth is, they never have been united. There never has been a State religion. As we listen to the hollow, empty jargon of popular orators who are trying their best to convince that England still possesses a national religion and a State Church, we are tempted to ask: But has England a *religious* nation and a *Christian* Parliament? We have observed that in nearly all discussions on this momentous subject, the adjectives employed ought to be nouns, and the nouns adjectives. Instead of characterising and defining, and qualifying Christianity or religion by the State or the nation, we would qualify and characterise the State and the nation by religion. A National Religion would be an infinite absurdity; but a *Religious* Nation is to be desired above all things. We have no faith whatever in a State Church, which may be nothing but a mere tool in the hands of an unrighteous Government; but with all the passion and ardour of our soul do we pray for the advent of a *Christian* State. Instead of baptising the Church into the name of the State, we would baptise the State into the hallowed name of the Church, which is the name of Truth, of Righteousness, of God.

The business of the Pulpit is to preach the Gospel to all men—to statesmen, politicians, lawyers, doctors, merchants, mechanics, farmers, all. Its message is addressed to mankind as such, irrespective of rank, class, station, office, character, or history. It raises its voice against all sins, of whatever nature, and by whomsoever committed. Partiality it cannot show. It must thunder out its unconditional condemnation of all vice and corruption everywhere. And its only theme is the great, sweet Gospel of life and peace through Jesus Christ. Has it anything to utter on the subject of politics? Yes; much every way, from its own point of view. It is the balances in which politics are to be weighed; and if they are found wanting, the preacher is authorised to inscribe upon them, in large, flaming characters, the terrific sentence—MENE. The Pulpit is God's chief representative here in this world; and if it be recreant to its solemn charge, the Divine judgment will rest upon it; and it cannot prosper. Political it should not be; and yet it must often speak about politics. If it becomes the organ of a party or clique, or of the State as such, it ceases to be a Pulpit; and if it remains perfectly silent on political questions, it likewise becomes unworthy to wear its august title: speak it must. Every true minister of Jesus Christ is a servant of the State, in that he is the servant of all men; not because ordained and appointed by the State to preach to outside sinners as subjects to the State, but because commissioned by God Himself to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

"No politics in any shape whatever, no reference of any kind to the civil government, in this sacred desk"—that seems to be an inflexible law in many a local, sectarian church; and woe be to the minister who is true and conscientious enough to break it. If the spirit moves him, and the sacred fire burns, and he hears the command issuing from the Throne, saying, "Denounce that abomination, smite that great iniquity and corruption of which the officials of the State are guilty in my sight," he will hear a counter-command from his church courts, accompanied with this wicked refrain, "At thy peril!" The Pew wants to lord it over the Pulpit. These two, the

Pulpit and the Pew, have always been at war, because this is never willing to acknowledge the superiority of that. The Pulpit represents God, the Pew man ; and blessed is he who, standing in the Pulpit, is bold enough to say, and to stick to it, "I will obey God rather than man."

Having thus opened the subject in our own feeble words, we now call upon Mr. Beecher to continue the discussion. He says :—"Do you note our Lord's example in preaching? Did expositions of the Old Testament, or disquisitions upon the reigning themes of religion, fill up His discourses? Did He consider human affairs as too vulgar, and social life too secular, and the natural world too unreligious for his sermons? His sermons reflect all passing events. Birds sang in His discourses ; the grass grew in His pulpit ; flowers blossomed there ! Now the vineyard was His text ; then the husbandman and his oxen ; the steward and his shrewd calculations ; the exchange and its coins ; the civil tribunal ; the army and the tax-gatherer ; the publican and the courtesan. He discoursed upon the dispositions, the thoughts, the errors, the virtues, the strifes or necessities of the age in which He lived, and of the people right before Him. He spoke, too, about religious things, not in the sacred phrases of the temple and the synagogue, but in the familiar language which men employ in every-day life.

"The notion that the Pulpit must be confined to the discussion of technically religious subjects implies that a man's character can be made independent of his secular life, and that the Church is to care only for his religious part. Alas ! that it should be so ; but we do separate our life from our religion. Our religious teaching leads us to do it. We seem to suppose that there is an apartment in the mind into which God can introduce religion. We appear to think that though in the other apartments are pride, and vanity, and worldliness, and secularities of every possible form, yet above them all is an apartment filled with religion. As in a building let out with many offices, there may be a pawnbroker in the basement, a lawyer on the ground floor, a purveyor in the second story, and far above them, poor people, so that if a philanthropist goes to take care of these poor people, he must not stop on the lower floors, but go up

where his beneficiaries live; thus men seem to think that a man is built with floors for worldliness, rooms for business, apartments for politics and traffic, halls for all sorts of trash, while in some little chapel-like faculty the soul attends to worship and religion generally. They suppose that there are six days to be devoted to the world, which are in no sense religious days, and that there is one day which is peculiarly religious. And there is one part of the mind which on that day they feel it their duty to bring into exercise, and that they want the minister to play upon. On Sunday they expect him to walk into the attic of their head and teach them their moral sentiments. If he talks about other things lower down, they say, 'Well, I should think I had enough of the world in six days of the week, without having it thrown into my face on Sunday.' They desire that the seventh day shall be a day in which a man shall have rest from passions; in which his conscience shall not hunt him; in which nothing shall disturb him. They say, 'I have wrought in the stithy and loom of my nature all the week, and for one day I want to wash and go where poetry will sing to me. And I want the minister to talk so that I shall have sweet dreams, and feel myself surrounded by delightful influences.' And then what? Why, on Monday they will go back to the same things that occupied them before Sunday came, and will follow them through Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and Saturday, and then withdraw themselves from them for a single day; as if, of the rooms in a man's nature, one was for organ-playing, and all the rest were for worldly avocations, restrained only by the laws of the land and the customs of society."

Such a narrow and limited view he cannot for a moment accept, because, necessarily, it must be extremely demoralising in its influence upon the community. "We must teach the essential unity of a man's life and character. We must teach that a man's religion is as much a part of his work behind the counter, the anvil, or the steering-wheel, as in the sanctuary and before the altar. I do not mean that we should accept the idea that right conduct is religion. I do mean, however, that religion must have a hold on right conduct. I mean that a man cannot be a saint on

Sunday and a usurer during the week. I mean that one should have his religious character so symmetrical that it will still be serving God, whether he is in the shop, on the farm, or in the thunder of battle." Religion should be to a man's life what fragrance is to the flower: it should inhere not distinct and apart in some upper leaf, but at the very core of the life itself, so as to pervade and give tone and colour to the whole of it, and so as to render it in all its parts eminently aromatic and sweet.

Mr. Beecher remarks again:—"There are some good men whose prejudices lead them to desire to have secular topics excluded from the pulpit, but there are other men who desire the same thing because they have sinuous and wicked courses that they are afraid to have inveighed against. When the vestmented priest says: 'Temperance and temperance societies!—what has the Church to do with such things? We are set to preach the Gospel, and not ismistical reformation,' the old man hears it reported to him from behind his barrels, himself as big and robustious as they, and says, 'That is the priest for me who wants reformation kept out of the pulpit.' And the debauchee says, 'Amen.'

"You and I were born in a land different in all its political ideas and civic duties from any other in the world. It was high treason to speak of political affairs in Rome, and the citizens had no business to meddle with civil affairs. But we live in a land where it is not our duty alone, but our necessity, to think about these things. And in the performance of my duty, while under ordinary circumstances I am not bound to teach you what are the individual elements of any party manœuvre, while I am not bound, as a general rule, to introduce the details of politics, I am bound, when any movement comes up that involves a great moral principle, to say, 'Christian men, in these political questions is a moral question!' And that principle, and its relation to the Church and the kingdom of Christ itself, I am bound to point out to you. When that is done, those men whose interest it is to have the community kept in ignorance that they may the better perpetrate their wrong, are smitten to the heart with the thought that erratic clergymen should

meddle with things that do not concern them! This is especially the case with regard to politics. But I declare that a minister who does not know anything about politics has no business to teach. What right has a man to teach my children who does not know his first duty? In a country where every citizen is called to make magistrates and laws, where he must shape politics or leave wicked men to do it—under such a government, if one is bound more than another to be acquainted with public affairs, and to enlighten men concerning them, it is the religious teacher. But, it is said, ministers of religion are ignorant of politics. More the pity! It is their business to learn their duty! If to pursue wicked ends by wicked courses; if to take sides with that which gravitates to the earth, and against that which aspires toward spiritual ideas; if always to be in favour of that which is base, and opposed to that which is noble; if to avoid the straight path of sincerity, and to stumble in the circuitous ways of deceit—if to do these things is to know politics, I confess that I am ignorant. But if to believe that there is such a thing as loving one's whole country; if to believe that there is such a duty as watching for one's country; if to believe that oppression is hateful, and nowhere else so hateful as in a Christian nation and in a Republic; if to be jealous of the rights of the poor, to urge their education and elevation; if to believe that it is a part of your Christian work, for the sake of your country, to be true, and bold, and fearless in season and out of season; if to believe these things is to be acquainted with politics, then I am informed. Heretofore the word *politics* has been a stench and a by-word; but there ought to be a public sentiment such that when a man does his political duty to the community, and the nation, and the age in which he lives, it shall be esteemed an eminent moral excellence, praiseworthy and noble!"

The foregoing extracts are from a sermon preached in the year 1861, when he had been in Brooklyn nearly fourteen years. The following incisive sentences are taken from a discourse delivered Sunday evening, 24th January, 1869, and entitled, "The Sphere of the Christian Minister:"—"There is a popular impression—and it seems to men like a

philosophical truism—that every man understands his own business best; that he need not be meddled with, at least till he asks advice; and that even then no one can counsel him so wisely as one of the same craft. Complaint is often made on that ground, of ministers, that they meddle with things that they do not understand. I think they do, too, when they preach theology! There is an amazing deal of wisdom that will be called rubbish one of these days! But when ministers meddle with practical life, with ethical questions and relations, they are meddling with just what they do understand, or ought to. If they do not understand these things, they have failed to prepare themselves for one of the most important functions to which they could address themselves as ministers.

“But look at this matter. Is it true that a man generally understands his own business best? Is it true that, if he needs counsel, he had better take it from some one who is in the same business that he is? I admit that there is a truth in this matter. Familiarity with details, which goes so largely to constitute success in any secular calling, may be supposed to be chiefly confined to those who are engaged in that calling. The printer knows more about the details of printing than I do. The lawyer knows more than I do about the thousand and one details of practice in our courts; of methods of procedure; of rules that have been formed; of precedents that have been established. The machinist understands the fashion of the machine—the principle and working of it, at any rate—better than I do. And in manufacturing interests men understand the interior of their business better than I do—unless I have made it a matter of special study. So of political economy. So of ten thousand interests in society.

“But does it follow that a man understands the general relations of his business to other businesses? Yet that is very important. Does it follow that a man understands the moral relations of his business better than an outsider? Does it follow that a man understands the relations of his business to political economy better than an outsider does? So far from that, experience shows that no man is so blind as a man that is immersed in his own business. It is not

often the case that any department of life is reformed of its own accord. Medicine does not reform itself. The reformation is thrown upon it from without. Law does not reform itself. It is the community that compels law to reform. Governments do not reform themselves. De Tocqueville said—and it was true then, it is true now, and it always will be true—‘Governments will be as rascally as the people will let them be.’ It is the light that is brought in from the outside that reforms governments. In some way the general interest of the whole community is concentrated upon some disturbing career, or business, until the men who are engaged therein yield to reformation. The reformation of any calling is seldom developed in the calling itself. It always is forced upon it *ab extra*.

“There is nothing, therefore, that is more untrue than that man understands his own business best, if by that you mean that he understands it in its largest relations—in its general results to the welfare of society; and more particularly if you mean that he understands his own business best in its moral influence upon himself, upon his fellows, and upon society. Usually, none understand the moral bearing of a business so little as the men who are embarked in it. The broker does not understand the moral relations of brokerage so well as I do, though he understands the details of that business far better than I do. The lawyer does not understand all the workings of the law as well as I do. It is not the machinery, but what it can do, what it works out, that I understand. It does not follow that the miller understands bread better than I do. I know what good bread is as well as he does. He knows more about the process of making flour than I do. The baker knows more about kneading dough, about the time it should require to rise, and about how long it should be in baking; but when it is done, and I take the loaf, and eat it, then I am as good a judge of bread as he is.

“And so it is with the various kinds of business. They bring out results here and there, and the community is made to take the benefit or damage, as the case may be. And men who stand and look on—men who have discrimination, large reflection, clear intuition, and who, above all, judge

from a moral standpoint—such men are competent to be critics of everything that there is in human society. But when, as preachers or teachers, they say, ‘You had better not loose from Crete,’ men turn to the captain, or the owner, as if he knew more than they. Let them take their storms. The time will come when you can say to them, ‘I told you so. You ought not to have loosed, and to have come to all this harm and damage.’

“Not alone to dwell in generalities, these remarks are abundantly true, and abundantly verified in the matter of law and its general procedure. It is not for me, perhaps, to say how a judge shall discharge his function; but it *is* for me to say when he discharges his function wrongly. It is not for me to say what is the special province of an advocate; but it is for me, when I see that a lawyer is violating the fundamental laws of morality, to be his critic. The moment he so conducts his profession that it touches the question of right and wrong, he comes into my sphere. There I stand; and I put God’s measure, the golden reed of the sanctuary, on him and his course; and I am his master, if I be a true seer and a true moral teacher; and I am not meddling. He has brought his business up to me the moment it comes into the sphere of right and wrong. He has brought it to my court, to my tribunal. For the truth stands back of all other courts, and has in the last estate to try every course and every procedure. Nothing is good for any individual in society that is not right. In the long run, righteousness is policy. Therefore, although it is not for me to meddle with the ordinary process of courts, or of the profession of the law, where certain courses and certain practices become damaging to the young, damaging to men at large, damaging by example, and damaging by corruption, it is for me to lay the law of God on them.

“There is a Judge that is higher than judges, whose servant I am; there is a Law that is higher than laws; there is a Court, thank God, a *Superior Court*, a *Supreme Court*, in which all inferior courts shall yet come to arbitrament, and many of them to damage. And I am not going out of my profession, I am not going one step beyond it, in meddling with these things. When they stink, and the stench comes

up into my nostrils, then it becomes my business to deal with them."

Of course a minister may be guilty of great indiscretion in regard to this question as well as in regard to any other; but that is not a sufficient reason for excluding politics from the Pulpit altogether. "A man may preach politics too much. A man may do it foolishly. So a man may administer a bank foolishly, manufacture foolishly, or carry on any other business foolishly; but that is no reason why a bank should not be established, why a man should not engage in manufacturing, or why business of any sort should not be carried on. A minister may not be discreet in preaching upon secular topics, but that is no reason why they should not be preached upon. There have been indiscreet ministers from the days of the apostles, and it would be strange if in the future there should not be found here and there one that is not discreet. But the duty of introducing such topics is now generally acknowledged. I think that question is settled, for your life and mine at least."

Again:—"The great mistake which men make in regard to the introduction into the Pulpit on the Sabbath-day of what are called secular topics, is that they do not conceive that such topics are to be discussed in the light of higher truths, and that they are to derive their influence and authority from the considerations which flow from the nature of Christ, and His claims upon us. I have a right to speak upon agriculture here—not as agriculture alone, but in the relations which it sustains to religion. 'Ye are God's husbandry,' saith the apostle. Many men are in that calling. It has an influence upon their thoughts, and feelings, and acts, and is working all the time in one way or another upon their souls, and it is my business to draw from it lessons for their instruction and benefit. Are you called to be a mariner? Then there are a thousand lessons that it is my business to draw from the life of a mariner, because they touch you. Are you called to be a tradesman? Then there are multitudes of lessons that it is my business to draw from the vocation of a tradesman, because it is taking hold of your tastes and habits, and is framing and fashioning something of your immortality. I am bound to discuss

financial questions—not for the sake of money, as a banker would discuss them, but because they have an influence upon the life and destiny of those whom they concern. I have a right to introduce into my sermons all secular topics as far as they are connected with man's moral character and his hopes of immortality. If I discuss them in a merely secular way, I desecrate the Pulpit; but if I discuss them in the spirit of Christ, and for Christ's sake, that I may draw men out of their peculiar dangers, and lead them into a course of right living, then I give dignity and nobility to the Pulpit."

The history of Plymouth Pulpit abundantly testifies to the fact that Mr. Beecher has been true to his convictions on this topic. He has not been afraid of men who disagreed with him, nor has he at any time suppressed the truth because he knew that a bold declaration of it would surely give more or less offence to individual hearers. "When I first came to you I said I would be free to speak on what I thought was right, and discuss every question that I thought ought to be discussed in the Pulpit, and I have attempted to do it. I am not mentioning it to boast of my fidelity, for you cannot have had such withering conceptions as I have of the incompetency of my ministry. I am not proud of having done much, but I am unspeakably overwhelmed with shame that, having so much truth on my side, I have done so little. And yet I can call you to witness that I have not used this pulpit to preach things because other ministers preached them, or for the sake of being at agreement with my brethren. I have never preached a thing that at the time I did not think to be true; and I laid it down, as a rule, that in my preaching I would not confirm a statement by any argument that did not seem to me to be a correct argument, however much it might be used, and however influential it might be. I have attempted to express my convictions without fear of running counter to your opinions and feelings. I have frequently borne testimony against your wishes, and sometimes when there was no inconsiderable discrepancy between your thoughts and mine. But there has been liberty to rebut my statements, and we have had unity; for there is always safety where there is liberty.

I have always attempted to follow this course, although, as you know, it has laid me open to great criticism, and called down upon my head, in the newspapers, from one end of the land to the other, the most opprobrious epithets, and the most unmeasured abuse, as having degraded the Sabbath-day and the Pulpit by introducing into my discourses subjects foreign to religion."

Sometimes he waxes beautifully eloquent, if not terribly indignant, in his defence of so bold and uncompromising a course. Towards the end of a very impressive sermon, in denunciation of a certain type of political corruption prevalent at the time, he made use of these strong and almost indignant words:—"Do you say, 'Is not this strange to be talking on Sunday night, and in a church, about these things?' What then! do you not believe that men are corrupt? Do not you believe that the young men are perverted in their ambition? Do not you believe that the bottom is falling out of honesty? Do not you believe that men are falling as far from patriotism as he fell from virtue, who—

'Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men,'

was hurled—

'With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition?'

And is there to be nobody to say anything about these things? Have you a church that is like a boy's toy? and am I to stand and play on my trumpet for the amusement of the nursery? Am I to see humanity damaged to its very core; am I to see the nation shaken to its deepest foundations; am I to see God's cause in imminent peril, and must I *remember that I am a minister*, and not talk about these things? Is that your idea of a minister's business? Is that your idea of fidelity on the part of a minister? Was that the course that made Isaiah and Jeremiah what they were? Was that the course that made Paul what he was? Was that the course that made martyrs and confessors? Was that the course that made every reformer who was hated in his own age and worshipped in the ages that followed?"

American politics are in a state of well-nigh hopeless corruption. Signs of improvement and reform have of late appeared ; but still it is a known and undeniable fact that even now the great majority of the politicians of America are proverbially and abominably corrupt. While we feel perfectly justified in lavishing enthusiastic and lofty encomiums upon the Constitution, yet a necessity is laid upon us to declare that the men who profess to maintain and uphold it are notoriously unreliable and dishonest. Most of them are so supremely bent on gain that they care absolutely nothing about the public weal. They are politicians alone for purposes of self-aggrandisement. They put their influence in this or that direction according as their cunning selfishness may dictate. They do not care with which party they identify themselves if only the reward promises to be sufficiently great. They have sold their principles and their manhood in order to buy position, fame, affluence, power. How many civil officers are both the dupes and the slaves of those who worked for their elevation, and who are now like so many ferocious wolves clamouring for their pay? How many Senators are bought and sold? How many Judges are continually bribed? Even the President is not above danger and suspicion, for he is carried to his august chair on the shoulders of men who will torment his very soul, and embitter his whole career, if he does not share his honours with them.

Universal suffrage may be a very desirable thing, but sadly has it been abused in America. It is easy and pleasant to descant upon the blessings of the franchise, but it is also easy to make it the tool of iniquity and corruption. The history of the American ballot forms a very black chapter. The ballot is the heart and life of the Government, and if it be corrupt there is very little hope of the Government. This form of political disease is by no means confined to America. Our own country cannot boast of possessing a pure ballot, as the General Election of 1880 amply showed. In America, however, the dangers from this source are far more numerous, and of a much more serious and damaging nature. There, everybody has a vote, and is at liberty to use it as he sees fit. Hence it follows

of necessity that there must be in that country a great deal of reckless, ignorant voting. There are thousands throughout the country who vote lazily, carelessly, thoughtlessly, without having any sense of the importance and possible consequences of the performance. There are others who use the ballot for wicked purposes, eager to fill the various offices of the State with men who have pledged themselves to pander to their mean and selfish ambition. There is also the practice of purchasing votes, which is most injurious in its influence upon the morality of the country. And is not the ballot itself tampered with in thousands upon thousands of cases? If there are men who will sell their votes at the polls for so much money, are there not those who, by fraud and violence, lay their hands upon the ballot-box, and substitute their own will for the decree and purpose of the people? Most startling revelations have been made during the last few years. Men of highest intelligence and amplest fortune have been criminally involved in the most gigantic fraud and dishonesty. The mask has been torn to pieces, and they who wore it so long, and apparently so successfully, have been brought to open confusion and shame. Let neither party rejoice at the downfall of the other, for both parties are unutterably corrupt, and their day of judgment is coming on.

Should a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ fold his arms in self-complacency, and allow such God-defying wickedness to exist unreprieved? Is he justified in supposing that it is out of his sphere to meddle with such things? Mr. Beecher answers by lifting up his voice and denouncing the corrupt politics of his country. "Bribery and corruption," he says, "the most profound, the most atrocious, and apparently increasing, is in our legislature; and that is not the worst of it. It is known in every town and every county that the next legislature will be as bad as the one that went before it, and it is denounced accordingly; and when the Republican goes down and the Democrat comes up, it is just as bad, and *vice versá*; whichever party goes to Albany it is all the same. Men are about alike after being dissolved in that cauldron." Speaking of that great statesman, Daniel Webster, he says:—"I mourn over him. I see how his

great, variously endowed, rich life was a matter of self-denial for the poor paltry office of the Presidency—an office that never makes a man great: as we have many instances to show, and which *belittles* a good many men that might have been great.” So deep is the corruption that “the highest magistrates are hurled from their high duties, sacred laws destroyed, and courts of justice eaten to the core by corruption.” Silent he cannot be, surrounded by such monstrous iniquities. Ought not all ministers to follow his example in this matter?

His object in thus exposing and denouncing politicians is not to discourage political activity, but rather to prevail upon conscientious, Christian people to take more interest in the affairs of the State. “The greatest of all the dangers to the ballot,” he says, “is indifference and neglect on the part of the educated community. To the ballot, all forms of passion are dangerous, all ignorance is dangerous, all violence is dangerous, all haste is dangerous, all venality is dangerous; but, after all, nothing is half so dangerous to the ballot, in my judgment, as indifference. It is the guiltiest, the wickedest, the most corrupting of all the evils with which the ballot has to contend.” Good men should not allow bad men to manage the political engine; and yet good men are generally very anxious to keep clear of politics. “Bad men—men that are consciously or unconsciously bad—in the community will always be seeking to hold and run the engine; and the good men, upright citizens, will always be stirred up, more or less reluctantly, to wrest the power of the Government from the hands of those who run it for carnal purposes.”

As this subject is of supreme importance, we will make further quotations:—“Consider how powerful parties are in such a nation as this, where they govern half a continent, or a whole continent, and embrace half the population; where they have conglomerated the interests of all classes of men. He knows very little of what parties are who does not know that they are webbed full of the interests of men. He knows very little of what parties are who supposes that they are mere representatives of political opinions. They involve questions of finance; questions of personal free

questions relating to the promotion of the interests of the community in a variety of ways; questions that are essentially commercial, and touch men in their very pockets and business. He who has possession of the Government finds in his hands a powerful instrument for the furthering of his own interest on every side; while, if it is in the hands of an antagonist, he finds his interest restrained on every side. Great parties represent not merely divisions of opinion, but all industrial interests, commercial interests; the vast property-interests of the country.

“Add, now, to those great moneyed corporations, like the New York Central Railroad, the Erie Railroad, or the Pennsylvania Central Railroad, which at any moment can take millions of dollars and throw them into the scale to warp legislation, to bribe the popular vote, and to touch the ballot in the most vital part. And consider how parties themselves stand open to these gigantic influences. As if it were not enough that there should be bad organisations on so broad a scale, see how parties themselves are becoming the ark into which every living creature is creeping.

“And when we consider what the future is to be; that this continent is not half developed; that its policy in a thousand directions is opening up schemes which are commensurate with the globe itself, and which include questions of humanity, and education, and even religion, touching morals in its very vitals; when we consider what pecuniary and partisan interests are brought to bear to control the ballot, have we nothing to fear? Is there no danger in these directions?

“I need not say what is understood by all—how largely these moneyed corporations have perverted justice. All of us who are of my age have lived through one period to see the consciences of men deadened by, and all their baser passions invested in, slavery. The whole nation was narcotized, and was led through a guilty dance of many years’ duration. And when at last slavery was destroyed, men felt—‘Now the nation, like an overloaded ship that has thrown its burden into the sea, will rise buoyant.’ But, ah! we did not throw human nature overboard; nor did we throw the passions overboard. This great evil was

one place where they resorted; but now that we have routed them from that, they have taken refuge in others. And we have as much to fear now from great corporated moneyed institutions, which spread themselves from ocean to ocean, and which are every year coming more and more into the command of treasure literally uncountable, as we had to fear from slavery. The terrific, gigantic pressure which is brought to bear upon popular affairs from these corporations ought to make every thoughtful man pause. I tell you we are, to-day, more in danger from organised money than ever we were in our lives from that which we regarded as the greatest of evils. And the battle of the future is going to be a battle of gold and silver.

“What can stand such a siege, such a bombardment, such sapping and mining, such assault without, and such treachery within? Can the ballot survive when there are so many interests which depend upon perverting it? When there is such force of commercial selfishness brought to bear against it, is there any chance that it can survive and have a power that shall control these other powers? It is time for us to think about these things.

“Here, then, is the reason why I declare that of all the dangers that threaten the ballot there is none which is comparable to indifference; for this indifference is chiefly practised by the rich, the refined, and the religious classes. To the poor it is a power—especially to those who have from foreign lands resorted hither. Never before having been allowed to have a voice in popular affairs, they feel that the ballot is an honour to them. But those who are born and bred here, and who are prosperous and cultivated, and who are living at ease, or are engaged in great industries—these are the men who do not esteem the ballot. These are the men who neglect the ballot. These are the men who, by their indifference, make the whole community undervalue the ballot. They are the men whose example is copied by the next rank below them. And their example is copied by the next rank below them. And theirs is copied by the next rank below them. It is the highest class that leavens the second; it is the second that leavens the third; and it is the third that leavens the last—for

influences go down in gradation. And if our best citizens have made up their mind, or so conduct themselves that people have a right to think that they have made up their mind, that the ballot is an insignificant thing, a matter of pure indifference, then down to the bottom of society men will say, 'Oh! it is a matter of indifference; and I can do what I have a mind to with it. I see that the best men do not think that it is of any account. I see that the minister does not, and that his parishioners do not, and that the prosperous merchant does not think that it is of any account; I see that they only vote occasionally by way of change, and that habitually they do not vote. From what I hear them say of the ballot, I judge that they regard voting as child's play. And as it is of so little account to them, I will take hold of it and see if I cannot make something out of it. I have a right to.' It is the indifference, the false witness of those classes in the community who are well-to-do, that brings the ballot into such great peril all through the whole community. If they had honoured it; if they had revered it; if by their practice they had made men feel that they regarded it as the vital germ of society; if their consciences had fluttered around about it; if their sensibilities had given colour to it; if they had instructed their children, and been themselves instructed in the house of God in regard to it; if they had in every way borne witness to their intense appreciation of the value of that which is the very beginning of our American society, then there would not have been such a mournful perversion of the ballot all the way through society. It is their indifference that throws the Government into the hands of crafty managing men."

The excuses which good men make for keeping aloof are exceedingly weak and shallow. They argue that politics are so corrupt that a Christian man cannot think of touching them. "What is politics?" asks Mr. Beecher. "It is supposed to be a game, and that a game of cunning, a gambler's game, a game of cards, a game of loaded dice; a game in this respect, that the lower instinct, the basilar faculties, largely predominate in the conduct of public affairs." Because of this, good, intelligent men make up

their minds that they will wash their hands in token of innocence, and have nothing whatever to do with politics. How inconsistent is such a resolution with the spirit of Christianity. We are here in this world for the purpose of purifying and ennobling it. If bad men are in power, it is our duty to combine in a mighty effort to overturn them. We are guilty of negligence and indifference to our duties in the sight of God as long as we fold our arms and allow wicked men to control the State. Such is the teaching of Mr. Beecher on this point, and incontrovertibly such is the teaching of Jesus Christ Himself.

Our preacher has often been blamed for severity and vehemence in his scathing delineations of wicked courses, and especially of wicked persons. But it would be a mistake to conclude from his burning denunciations that he has no pity for flagrant offenders. His heart bleeds for them. He remembers that they are men. If he could, in consistency with public justice, he would stand by their side, that they be not utterly overwhelmed. His indignation is not against the men as such, but against their conduct, and against the circumstances which render such conduct possible. When it was discovered, a few years ago, that six or seven men had been guilty of enormous frauds and deceptions in connection with the management of public affairs in the city of New York, the anger and wrath of the community at large knew no bounds; but Mr. Beecher, while concurring in the general sentiment that the culprits were worthy of punishment, and ought to suffer pangs of remorse, argued that the blame should have been distributed among thousands, and the detected perpetrators of the crime looked upon as only leaders and participators in sins that were well-nigh universal. To adopt his own words:—

“I regard the culprits in these flagrant transactions as so many boils and carbuncles; as so many points where the diseases of the body emptied themselves. The whole body was full of morbid matter, and these were the places where it was manifested. They are notorious criminals that *are criminal*; but they represent in a sad way the average condition of the communities in which they dwell. The permissions, the lowness of moral sentiment, the neglect, the various

forms of positive wrong, which are winked at, indulged, in others, without blame, or are actively employed by ourselves—these have conspired to the production of diseases which we all of us feel to be a shame and a disgrace.” How eager he is to press this lesson home upon his hearers:—“There has been enough indignation poured out on the culprits of New York, if it had been felt before, and distributed among the population equitably, to have saved us from the difficulty. This indignation of conscience after the offence is very well; but a foregoing conscience that has indignation against possible evils, and prevents them, is more profitable. I do not wonder at the indignation; nor do I wonder at the anger; nor should I restrain it; but still, we ought not to spend all the indignation and anger on those who have done the wrong. It is a partnership. There is some of your blood, and some of mine, in every one of those thieving rascals. We are their fathers. It is said to be a wise son that knows his father; but there are a great many of you of whom it may be said that you do not know your own sons. We breed felons when we permit, or in minor matters set on foot, those causes which issue in the production of laxness in public or commercial life.”

We see, then, that Mr. Beecher does not discuss public questions in a narrow, secular, and party spirit, for the purpose of promoting the interests of some political faction, but in a generous, loving, sympathetic tone, in the hope of begetting in the hearts of all men a deeper, holier love for truth and righteousness, and a more resolute determination to conduct themselves in accordance with the eternal and unchangeable laws of the Universe. How greatly is such preaching needed in these perverse, degraded days! How sad the thought that in the majority of cases the Pulpit is cowardly, compromising, blind, indifferent, spiritually dead! Wickedness is rampant, crimes abound, political corruption increases, business is immoral to the very core. The very foundations of society are gradually giving way, and yet the Pulpit is not bold enough to utter the warning cry, or honest enough to describe the coming doom, or serious enough to plead with men to forsake their evil ways and implore the Divine pardon. But Plymouth Pulpit speaks

out with terrible authority and profoundest earnestness, and seeks to produce a higher tone of morality in the world. How true and necessary are the following observations:—“I need not tell you how commerce is invested, and how it has permitted itself to be overborne with corrupt tendencies. I need not tell you that many and many business establishments have been schools of equivocation, and deceit, and immorality. Every man who winks in his business at fraud, every man who mixes the conduct of his business with lies and dishonesty, no matter how small the thread may be which he is spinning for the fabric of evil which is being woven, becomes *particeps criminis* with those men who break out in positive mischief. Do you think it is such an awful thing to steal? Do you hound after the men who have stolen, crying, ‘Thieves! thieves! thieves?’ Why, a man who puts his hand up to his shoulder into his neighbour’s chest and pulls out bags of gold, is no more a thief than the man who, with his delicate thumb and finger, takes out a pinch of his neighbour’s gold. You think that the former is a profitable thief because he takes a big pile, and the latter a contemptible one because he takes only a pinch; but every man who sells by false weight, who deals in false goods, who cheats in the appearance of his goods; every man who lies to his customers, and manufactures fraudulently, and distributes fraudulently what he manufactures, has given a drop of blood to these miscreants, and has joint parentage in them. You have been preparing for such things. Business has been the anvil on which has been beaten out these superlative villains. ‘Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’ Think ye that those six or seven on whom the *New York Times* has fallen are sinners above all that dwell in New York? Nay. I say to every man that smuggles goods; to every man that sells on false invoices; to every man that fashions things deceitfully; to every man that carries on business which he is afraid to have the light of God’s eye rest upon; to every man who swears falsely in regard to his affairs, and gives in a false account of his income; to every

man who hides his prosperity to get rid of paying his lawful and just taxes—I say to every such man, you are as guilty as these *detected* villains. Ah! if all the men who have been guilty of fraud in New York were to have a tower fall on them, there would be funerals for fifty years to come.

“When we organise deceit; when it is thought that a man may be respectable who is known to heap up money by most disreputable courses; when we take a man by his property instead of by his character; when in business circles things that are atrocious in their nature, such as the tripping up of men unawares, are tolerated; when in the bank, in the broker’s office, in the importer’s or retailer’s store, or in the street, such things are known, and become so smooth that, as even in my own case it is not considered a thing surprising to offer a minister two bills—one to pay on, and the other to run to the Custom House with; when men have almost lost the sense of honour and honesty; when the community is a dunghill, a hot-bed, as it were, of corruption; and when at last here and there men break out into ravening, then do you think it is fitting for the whole community to prey upon them, and visit them with a fiery storm, as though they were the only culpable ones? They are criminals; but they are only mirrors that you may see yourself in. Look at them, and see what you are when you are dishonest. Look at them, and see what you are when you swindle your neighbour’s store. That is all they have done. Look at them, and see what you are when you cheat at the Custom House. That is all they have done. Look at them, and see what you are when you swear falsely in regard to taxation. That is all they have done. What have they done? Stolen? So have you. Lied? So have you. Been false to their oaths? So have you. Men might have necklaces of beads almost uncountable representing their wrong deeds, and they would not all be represented. One string about their neck could not carry them all.

“It is notorious, flagrant laxity of morals in business that breeds these things. And when you are looking about for the cure, and asking, ‘Do you think they will be able to get a hold on them?’ ‘Do you think they will be able

to bring them to justice?' do you want *all* the criminals brought to justice? Do you want God to lay judgment to the line? Do you want the wrong traced back to business? Are you willing to face God and your own enlightened conscience in the presence of Almighty God? Have you not something to say respecting your own deeds as school-masters of villains? I would not have you judge any less severely of these public crimes; but I would have you intensify in yourselves the sense of the fact that multitudes of you are proceeding on principles identical with those on which these men are proceeding; that you have the same tendencies to want of virtue that they have; and that you owe your integrity and respectability much more to circumstances than to conscience."

Believing in the essential unity of the human race, and in the equality of all men before God, Mr. Beecher has always been very ready to take up and plead the cause of the weak and oppressed classes of the country. His sympathies are not with the great and powerful, but with the downtrodden and neglected. He calls upon the churches of the land to come to the rescue of those who are over-slaughed and despised by society at large, and thus show that they desire to echo Him who gave His life to save sinners. He reminds them of their culpable indifference in the past, and urges them to clothe themselves with the power of Christ's love, and go forth to wage war against the unrighteousnesses and iniquities of the world. His blood is hot when he remembers that Christian America has not done its duty towards the outcast and despised within its borders. The State has neglected them because the country has never earnestly taken their part; and whence shall the voice of duty issue if not from the Pulpit and the Church?

One class of people, in its dealings with whom the American Government has been notoriously unjust, are the Indians. The Americans are bound to regard these people, not as immigrants, but as the original possessors of the land, who have just rights and claims, and who ought to be dealt with in a kind, generous, and considerate manner. But the history of the last hundred years contains an extremely dark chapter, the reading of which ought to

be very painful and humiliating to the United States Government. At first these native tribes were looked upon as independent powers, and were negotiated with by treaty. The Government entered into business relations with them, and purchased of them all the land which they could be prevailed upon to sell. But as the white man gained power and numerical ascendancy, the treaty policy was altogether departed from, and finally became extinct. In the year 1871, when the number of treaties had reached more than 350, Congress prohibited all future transactions on that basis; and a new system, known as the "reservation system," came into being. In this policy the poor Indians are regarded as subjects, and dealt with accordingly. This system, under certain circumstances, might have succeeded, but in America it was doomed to fail. The whole current of national development militated against it; and the Government found itself too weak to discharge its duties. The Indians were, in consequence, neglected, maltreated, murdered, and in every way wronged. Their lands were taken from them, their rights were contemptuously thrown aside, and their blood was made to flow in mighty rivers. The story of the last fifteen years is enough to make one's blood boil with righteous indignation, and the whole blame must be laid at the door of the Government. Lands solemnly promised to them in perpetuity have been ruthlessly snatched from them and given to the greedy and unscrupulous whites. Should the Pulpit remain quiet and allow these atrocities to be committed unrebuked? Is it not the duty of every true man, everywhere, to denounce in scorching terms all such cruelties? The Pulpit at large, alas, has been mute. But here and there the voice of warning and condemnation has been raised, and earnest, solemn pleadings for the oppressed have gone forth. Plymouth Church has often rung with plaintive appeals to the national sense of justice and Christian duty, and with burning denunciations of the infamous courses followed in the past, and at the present time too.

Here is a specimen of Mr. Beecher's utterances on this subject:—"Is it in the power of our nation to have such sympathy for these remnants of a race, despoiled of their

rights, as to save them alive? The idea of saving their territory for them was given up long ago. That you cannot do. If they are in the fields, the husbandman wants the fields. If they are in the mountains, the miner finds out that there is gold there, and he wants the mountains. If they are sent to the North, there is reason why they should be sent back to the South again. They are the shuttlecock between the battledoors of our political parties. Is there enough of Christ in all the churches, and in the whole public sentiment of this boastful Christian people, I will not say to educate and exalt this barbarous remnant, but to save their lives?" "Every command of the Decalogue is broken over their head. Instead of being an alabaster box of precious ointment, it is a Pandora's box full of curses and mischiefs. They plead in our courts, they plead before our Government, they plead in the streets, and who shall rise up and vindicate them? When I think that God loves them, poor as they are often, and mean often, I cannot but believe that somewhere the lightning will strike, that somewhere the Divine judgment will fall. Do not call yourselves a Christian people if, with forty million men professing Christ, you cannot save a pitiful million of Indians, who had the territory before you, and whose right to it is better than yours. It is the world's shame! It is our own special ignominy! It is a horrible thing—*horrible!*"

Another persecuted class for whom Mr. Beecher has often pleaded are the Chinese. There seems to exist in certain quarters in America a very strong and determined opposition to free immigration from the land of the rising sun. A short time ago a bill was brought before Congress forbidding the Celestial Empire to send its needy classes to the Western Republic; and the bill would have become law had it not been for the veto of President Hayes. His sense of national honour enabled him to use his authority, and crush the infamous proposition under his feet. Senator Blaine did his utmost for the success of the principles of that wicked bill, and a host of hungry politicians, who had no love for justice and fairplay, gave him their support. Their argument was and is that the Chinamen who come over to America are coolies, that China, by permitting them to come, has broken

her treaty with the United States, that they are abominable idolaters, and cannot be Christianised, that they will never become thorough American citizens, that their moral influence is corrupting, that they underbid and degrade American labour, and that, if permitted, they will come over in overwhelming numbers. But competent judges assure us that this argument is false, and has been abundantly disproved in every particular. Mr. Gibson, a well-known missionary in China, contends that most of the Chinese now in San Francisco are there voluntarily, and that they will not be allowed to return to their native country without first paying all their debts in America. Senator Moreton, in papers published by Congress, speaks on this wise:—"The evidence established the fact that Chinese labour in California is as free as any other. They all come as free men, and are their own masters absolutely." That they are not beyond the reach of the Gospel is evident from the fact that in the mother-country there are at the present time about 800,000 Roman Catholics and 15,000 Protestants, the result of missionary labour extending over two hundred and fifty years on the part of Rome, and forty years on the part of Protestants. There are several Chinese students in American Colleges, and they get on quite as well as other students. A young Chinaman, by the name of Yung Wing, has received from Yale College the degree of LL.D., and is declared to be of great intellectual promise. One man testified of him as follows:—"There is not a grander man on the face of the earth than this same Yung Wing. He is a noble fellow. I want you to get acquainted with him. He has a grand head—a Daniel Webster head. He is an American citizen now." It might be also stated that he has married an American lady.

A few years ago Mr. Beecher visited the Chinese settlement in San Francisco, and his testimony went to prove that the Chinese are not more corrupt, on the average, than other nationalities. He declared that he did not see half as much vice and corruption among the Chinese in San Francisco as may be witnessed any day in the slums of New York. Joseph Cook, the celebrated Boston Monday Lecturer, says that the Chinese are corrupting "only to those

who are already spoiled ; and if the statements of sand-lot oratory are true, only to those who are doubly and quadruply spoiled, and have rolled in iniquity till they have burned out their own eyes. The vices of the Chinese are dangerous only to the dissipated, and dissipation begins in San Francisco at the American gambling hells, and in the American whisky dens. It is the duty of American law to repress and eradicate the iniquities of both the white and yellow race on the Pacific Coast. Families with Chinese servants in them do not complain of this corruption."

We need no further proof of the fact that the Chinese are severely persecuted in America ; and if they are so persecuted is it not the duty of the ministers of Jesus Christ to plead their cause ? Mr. Beecher has done so from his own pulpit as well as from public platforms times without number. In withering terms has he denounced the "thick-ribbed hatred" that has existed against the Chinaman. He has accused the statesmen of having "abandoned the faith of their forefathers and the spirit of the true Democracy," and of having gone "a-whoring after votes to California and Oregon in order that they might become presidents of the United States." He refers to the "shameful defections of the ministers and bishops in the matter." "Here come these people," he says, "that are the most laborious, the most economical, and, when they have the opportunity, the neatest people on the globe, the people that are best able to redeem the wilderness, and to do the work without which California would become a desert, living on the crumbs, not even the crusts ; and the spirit of race hatred exists to such a degree that they are shaking the Government at Washington—the spirit of bitter race hatred among those who are themselves immigrants, and have come from poverty to opportunity. That spirit has had such a power upon the Christian public sentiment of the land as that our Government has been in the most lordly manner commanded to change treaties, or to violate treaties. We are a Christian nation ; we are sending missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, to Bengal, and to the islands of the sea. Oh, that you would send missionaries, and pick out the Kearneys, and send them away ! We are sending too much Gospel

away. We have not enough left for home consumption. Shall we send to the heathen the Gospel as it is exemplified in California? What does a heathen man want of a Christ when he sees what the men are who profess to be Christians? What does he want of the Gospel as it is preached to him in San Francisco? What idea must men have of our own institutions who are better treated under the despotism of China than they are under the Republican rule of California? What do they want of a Bible that indicates its inspiration by the conduct of such men as are oppressing the Chinaman in this land?"

Is not this preaching the Gospel in the true spirit thereof? It is evangelical preaching as applied to the subject of politics, or, rather, as applied to the morality of politics. The times cry for more of such preaching. May the time soon come when all ministers shall have been thoroughly awakened to the great, comprehensive work that lies before them, and when the Church shall be a source of strength and purity to the whole community.





CHAPTER VIII.

ANTI-SLAVERY EFFORTS.

MR. BEECHER entered the ministry at a time when the politics and morality of the country were in a state of deplorable corruption and degeneracy. Vices and crimes of every description, dishonesties and frauds the most disgraceful, moral delinquencies and hypocrisies the most culpable, abounded on every hand; and there were few with conviction and courage enough to speak against them. The giant sin, however, the one that towered like the oak above the underwood of the forest, was slavery; and woe was to him who uttered one solitary word in condemnation of it. It was one of the institutions of the land; and no discussion whatever was allowed upon it. Christian people even claimed that the Bible was in its favour and justified it; and it was generally proclaimed that the negroes had been created to occupy a position of absolute bondage, and were consequently unfit for the enjoyment of the high privileges of freedom. This was the sentiment entertained by the Christian Church throughout the land; and it was solemnly declared that no other sentiment could be tolerated. Slavery might be an evil, in itself considered, perhaps; but, then, it was a necessary evil, and could not be removed: conditions and circumstances rendered it a stern necessity.

And it threatened to become once more a universal evil,

if not in practice, yet in policy. The Government was in danger of committing itself, unwittingly, to a slave policy that would eventually, no doubt, introduce slavery into all the States, North as well as South. We are all acquainted with the heroic and noble manner in which the North had early abandoned the iniquitous practice of holding slaves; but now secret, cunning efforts were being made to involve it once again in the terrible abomination. The South was sedulously working towards such a fearful consummation. Its first step was to introduce slavery into the Territories; that is, to secure the formation of a Slave State for every Free State. That was only the thin edge of the wedge, the ultimate design evidently being to deluge the whole country with its own slave system. While the Church of the North was fast asleep, the politicians of the South were wide-awake, scheming, devising, sowing their seeds. Subtile as the Old Serpent itself were these demons of the South; and had they been able to pursue their impious, devilish course a little longer, slavery would have been established in America on such a solid basis that centuries of anti-slavery agitation would not succeed in uprooting it. This is not a mere opinion, or guess-philosophy, or logical deduction, but a solemn, awful FACT, which cannot be denied by any who respect the truth. We have learned it from Southern lips, not from any party or clique in the North. Take the following from a speech delivered by Mr. Stephens, the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, who was very pronounced in his opposition to secession:—"Gentlemen, what have we to gain by this proposed change of our relation to the general Government? We have always had the control of it, and can yet, if we remain in it, and are as united as we have been. We have had a majority of the Presidents chosen from the South, as well as the control and management of most of those chosen from the North. We have had sixty years of Southern Presidents to their twenty-four, thus controlling the Executive department. So of the judges of the Supreme Court; we have had eighteen from the South and but eleven from the North—although nearly four-fifths of the judicial business has arisen in the Free States, yet the majority of the Court has always been

from the South. This we have required so as to guard against any interpretation of the Constitution unfavourable to us. In like manner we have been equally watchful to guard our interest in the legislative branch of the Government. In choosing the presiding Presidents (*pro tem.*) of the Senate, we have had twenty-four to their eleven. Speakers of the House, we have had twenty-three, and they twelve. While the majority of the representatives, from their greater population, have always been from the North, yet we have so generally secured the Speaker, because he, to a greater extent, shapes and controls the legislation of the country. Nor have we had less control in every other department of the general Government, Attorney-Generals we have had fourteen, while the North have had but five. Foreign Ministers we have had eighty-six, and they but fifty-four. While three-fourths of the business which demands diplomatic agents abroad is clearly from the Free States, from their greater commercial interests, yet we have had the principal Embassies, so as to secure the world's markets for our cotton, tobacco, and sugar on the best possible terms. We have had a vast majority of the higher offices of both army and navy, while a larger proportion of the soldiers and sailors were drawn from the North. Equally so of clerks, auditors, and comptrollers, filling the Executive department, the records show that for the last fifty years that of the three thousand thus employed, we have had more than two-thirds of the same, while we have but one-third of the white population of the Republic."

From the testimony of this influential Southerner, it is perfectly plain that "the object of Southern policy, early commenced and steadily pursued, was to control the Government, and to establish a slave influence throughout North America." Now, against this infamous, systematic, under-handed policy of the South, the North was *politically* too weak to contend, if it was even aware of its existence. It finally did become too painfully aware of its existence; and when that occurred, it began to realise its *moral* responsibilities in the matter. It was thoroughly aroused *then*; but not before. The Christian people of the country did not consider, would not consider, flatly refused

to consider the true nature and bearings of the case until the South, with clawed hands, threatened to submerge them and their country beneath the furious waters of slavery, which were then rushing on towards them. In the early part of the century the moral sense of the North was locked in profoundest sleep.

There were a few gifted, superiorly inspired men here and there, it is true, through whom God was thundering out in flaming oratory against the gigantic evil. These men were in thorough earnest, had a deep sense of the universal brotherhood of mankind, and could not dwell in peace as long as so many of their brethren were in fetters. They had a mission in the world ; and to them life was intensely real, and big with tremendous possibilities. One at least of those worthies, those pioneers of human liberty in dark times, we must mention by name—WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON. We find him, as early as 1829, delivering an address in Boston on the subject of slavery. To him, more than to any other perhaps, was the North indebted for that education and development of public opinion which opened the eyes of the whole people to the eternal fact that slavery was a stupendous evil, and ought to be destroyed without mercy. He was a man who had consecrated himself, soul and body, to the cause of the poor slaves. He had no other business or purpose in life than to plead that glorious cause at the bar of public opinion ; and plead it he did until the desired effect was produced. We may judge of his intense earnestness by the following anecdote:—When he first espoused the cause, he was very anxious to secure the sympathy and co-operation of the leading men both in politics and in the Church. He called upon several of them to solicit their assistance ; and among others he went to Dr. Lyman Beecher, who was then a great light in the Boston Pulpit. The doctor received him favourably, spoke very kindly and sympathetically to him, expressed himself as being deeply interested in the subject, wished him all success, but excused himself from putting his strong shoulder under the wheel, by saying that he had so many irons in the fire. “Then,” said the serene, saintly-looking enthusiast, “you had better let all others go, and attend to

this one alone." That, certainly, was the right spirit in which to take up the work; and that was the spirit in which Garrison *did* take it up. It was his *only* work for a lifetime; he never had any other iron in *his* fire. Nobly did he do his part to the very end. He was subjected to very rough treatment often—stoned, thrown into prison, misrepresented, maligned; but he endured all like a hero without a murmur, and lived to see the supreme desire of his heart accomplished.

Did space permit we could name many more, such as Weld, Alvin Stewart, Geritt Smith, Joshua Seavitt, William Goodell, Arthur and Lewis Tappan, Wendell Phillips, who laboured with credit both to themselves and to their country. Some of these men took part in the formation of the first Anti-Slavery Society in the city of New York, which gave rise to the notorious riots of 1833-4. It is difficult for us to conceive how great a risk those pioneers had to run, to how many dangers they laid themselves open, and how much most of them did actually suffer. The tumult assumed such proportions in New York that many of the leaders of the new cause were compelled to flee from the city for dear life, and to take refuge in some secluded spot far away in the country. Churches were totally demolished, and private houses sacked without pity. It was at the peril of his life that a white man associated with a negro. One Sabbath morning a coloured Presbyterian minister, on going to hear the Rev. Dr. Cox preach, was invited to take a seat with one of the members in the body of the church. This circumstance was regarded as an insult by other prominent members, who held a meeting after service to record their protest against such sinful irregularity. Dr. Cox listened to their indignant harangues with infinite pity and pain; and on the succeeding Sunday evening he preached a sermon on the division of mankind into races, for the purpose of showing the utter folly of entertaining race-antipathies. In the course of his remarks he ridiculed the custom of judging men according to colour, and illustrated his point by saying, among other things, that the Abyssinians made their devil a *white* man, and that Jesus Christ Himself was not of our complexion, but of a

dark Syrian hue, probably a little darker than his brother-minister against whom they had raved so madly because of his colour. It was enough, alas! and more than enough, to men who were on the alert for an accusation against the worthy doctor. In the next issue of the "Courier and Enquirer," it was stated that Dr. Cox had said in his pulpit, on the previous Sabbath, that "the Saviour of mankind was a negro." The news spread like fire in a Western prairie, and the greatest excitement possible prevailed throughout the city. A merchant was heard to say, with clenched fist, in speaking of Dr. Cox, "He is against slavery, and the South, and the Union! And, would you believe it? he called *my Saviour* a nigger! G—d d—n him." Well, finally, poor Dr. Cox and his family had to leave the city; and his house and church were mobbed.

While these outrages and crimes were being perpetrated in different parts of the country, Henry Ward Beecher was busy getting ready for the warfare of life. He read the accounts in the papers with absorbing interest; and in the sacred chambers of his heart a solemn resolve was gradually forming, that as soon as opportunity came he would join the little band who had taken sides with the oppressed and weak sons of Ham. In due time he entered the ministry. As soon as he was settled at Indianapolis, he was convinced that the time had arrived when he should speak out. But how was he to go about the work? Duty said, "Do it here, and now; deliver thy message without fear." But what was the best method of doing it? Do it he must; but how? A great deal depends upon the manner in which a thing is done. There was a very strong feeling in the town against introducing slavery into the discussions of the pulpit. All the principal men in his own church were deadly opposed to any anti-slavery agitation; and one of them went so far as to swear that if an abolitionist came there he would head a mob to put him down. That was certainly very discouraging; but the young minister was a man of tact and pluck, altogether not the man to smother his convictions because of opposition. He felt that subject was a subject that ought to be preached upon; but he was just as sure that if he preached an out-

and-out abolition sermon his usefulness in that parish would be gone. How could he obey the dictates of conscience without injuring his usefulness in the town? One Sabbath he wanted to illustrate a certain point in his discourse, which he "did by picturing a father ransoming his son from captivity among the Algerines, and glorying in his love of liberty, and his fight against bondage." The people were afraid that he was going to apply it to American slavery, but he simply applied it to his subject, and went on, to the great relief of all. Before long he brought the subject before Synod by introducing a resolution recommending every minister within the bounds to preach "a thorough exposition and condemnation of slavery." Desirous of acting at once on his own recommendation, he preached three sermons on the history of the Israelites in Egypt, dwelling with stirring, heartrending eloquence upon their suffering while in bondage, and upon the greatness of their deliverance through Divine interposition. In severest language did he denounce Pharaoh and his iniquitous practices—dark and frightful was the picture he drew of the extreme agonies of the poor Hebrew slaves; but the people were delighted, "for it has always been held both orthodox and edifying to bombard the vices and crimes of Old Testament sinners, and to show no mercy to their iniquities." It was not long, however, before the people discovered that the preacher's aim was to demolish their own idol before their eyes, and to expose their own enormous sins. The Pharaoh of antiquity represented the American Government and the Southern slaveholder; and old Egypt was only another name for Christian America in the nineteenth century. Thus his hearers listened approvingly to a thorough and most impassioned condemnation of slavery without being in the least aware of it; and when they did discover it, they could not possibly feel offended, but were rather inclined to be convinced. From that time Mr. Beecher preached against slavery just as often as he thought best; and at length his church became as zealous as himself in the advocacy of the good cause.

He came to Brooklyn in the full conviction that anti-slavery was a part of the Gospel of Christ, and should be

preached as such. One of the first texts from which he preached in Plymouth Church was 1 Cor. ii., 1, 2--"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." In the course of the sermon he told the people "that a minister's duty is to teach men how to conform not their dispositions alone, but their outward lives to the commands of Christ in His Gospel;" that he would be free to speak on what he thought was right, and to discuss every question that he thought ought to be discussed in the pulpit. He kept his word to the very letter. Plymouth Church was soon made to ring with hot and heavy attacks upon slavery. The financial success of the church depended entirely on the annual sale of the seats; and Mr. Beecher had the moral courage to announce, as the year came round, that every one who intended to become a seatholder must be prepared to hear the Gospel preached in its application to every question of the day. His sister, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, assures us that "always as the year came round, when the renting of the pews approached, Mr. Beecher took occasion to preach a sermon in which he swept the whole field of modern reform, with particular reference to every disputed and unpopular doctrine, and warned all who were thinking of taking their seats what they must expect for the coming year." It is not to be inferred, however, that he used to introduce the subject of slavery every Sabbath, or even every month; for slavery, it must be remembered, was but one out of many topics which he felt himself called upon to discuss. His enemies, who knew him but slightly, and in many cases only by hearsay, often charged him with preaching nothing save the doctrine of anti-slavery. He once told us that a Southerner came to hear him on two occasions, with an interval of two years; and on both occasions his theme was, *The Christian View of Slavery*. The Southerner concluded, of course, that during that interval of two years no other subject was discussed in Plymouth Church; whereas Mr. Beecher had touched upon it but once or twice, and then only incidentally, during the whole of that period.

But it was never a forgotten subject with him ; he never neglected it ; his people were never allowed to sleep in regard to it.

The secret of all true success in preaching is faith. If the preacher is not himself a believer, his doctrine falls dead, and bears no fruit whatsoever. But Mr. Beecher believed, with all the intensity of his great soul, that slavery was a monstrous evil, and that it could never be well with those who supported it ; and his denunciation of it burned into the very hearts of those who heard him. As an illustration, take the following fact :—A party of four Southern gentlemen were stopping for a short time at the St. Nicholas, New York. One of them was induced to go and hear Mr. Beecher. He went, full of Southern prejudice, which worked and rankled with diabolical fierceness in his breast, but returned a convert to the cause of the North. On the following Sabbath these four sons of the South sat together in Plymouth Church, listening with absorbing interest to the man whom they had always been taught to regard as a sworn enemy ; “and the effect was such that they altered their plan of travel, stayed over another week, and finally would not leave without an introduction, at which Southern frankness vied in expression with Southern heartiness.” When they discovered that the preacher was not an enemy of themselves personally, but simply of the God-defying idol which they cherished and worshipped ; that he loved them, sympathised with them, desired their greatest good ; that his whole nature glowed with genuine enthusiasm and terrible earnestness ; and that he spoke not in his own name, but in the sacred name of the nature of things, of eternity, of God, their prejudice against him dissolved, melted away like a shower of snow in the April sun, and their life-long attachment to slavery ceased at once and for ever. It was faith, firm as the everlasting rocks—heart-felt conviction—that wrought such a mighty result.

The foundation-principle in Mr. Beecher’s creed, which gave force and vitality to all his utterances on this question, was the essential *oneness* of all men in the sight of God. “It makes no difference,” he used often to say, “what you call men—prince, peer, or slave. *Man* is that

name of power which rises above them all, and gives to every one the right to be that which God meant he should be. No law, nor custom, nor opinion, nor prejudice has the right to say to one man, 'You may grow,' and to another, 'You may not grow;' or, 'You may grow in ten directions, and not in twenty;' or to the strong, 'You may grow stronger;' or to the weak, 'You may never become strong.' Launched upon the ocean of life, like an innumerable fleet, each man may spread what sails God has given him, whether he be pinnace, sloop, brig, barque, man-of-war; and no commodore or admiral may signal what voyage he may make, or what canvas he shall carry."

Believing this truth with his whole heart, and mind, and soul, how could he endure, or in any way tolerate slavery? How could he hold his peace while four millions of his brother-men were pining daily under the cruel, inhuman yoke of servitude? He would have been a craven-hearted recreant, a mean-spirited coward had he kept silence with that fundamental, glorious conviction asserting itself within him. To proclaim that all men had equal rights was to sound the death-knell of slavery. And, furthermore, since he believed that every man was created for liberty, for the free, untrammelled use of all his faculties, physical as well as spiritual, it was but natural that he should entertain bright hopes of the future. The truths of liberty and equality had been given to men by the Most High Himself, and were meant to be like mothers' breasts, carrying food for ages. "Let us not fear," he said, "that in our land they shall be overthrown or destroyed. Though we may go through dark times—rocking times, when we are sea-sick—yet the day shall come when there shall be no more oppression, but when, all over the world, there shall be a common people sitting in a commonwealth, having a common Bible and a common God, and common peace and joy in a common brotherhood."

But while that blessed time delayed coming, while that happy day of release lingered on the far-off horizon, the arch-devil that ceased not from troubling the land must be denounced, painted in the most frightful colours, which are its *own* colours, and made to stare out upon the world in

all its native ghastliness and horror-producing hideousness. Men had been covering it up for generations with sweet, persuading rhetoric and enrapturing oratory, or rather endeavouring to ensconce it behind clouds of plausible arguments and false logic, so that the common people could not see it all: *they* beheld simply a lovely angel, with soft sparkling eyes and celestial wings, surrounded by a halo of transparent, heavenly light—not the real demon from the bottomless pit. It was imperative, therefore, that some one should appear to uncover the ugly, offensive skeleton, to denude it of all the purple robes thrown over it to hide its sad deformity, and to compel the people to look at it disclosed in its true character till they learned to detest and abhor it. That was a considerable part of Mr. Beecher's mission in this world. He called the thing by its own name, and pronounced a sentence of death upon it. His message was this:—"Slavery is a devouring curse, thoroughly debasing in its nature and influence. You must not love it, my friends; you must look upon it as abominable, odious, execrable, unworthy of your patronage not only, but infinitely deserving of your hottest indignation and wrath: and high heaven calls upon you to sweep it hence from upon the face of the earth." That was his message, and most nobly and courageously did he utter it. The whole nation heard him, and trembled with nervous fear; the North heard him, and rejoiced, yet with forebodings. Here are a few sentences, illustrative of the style of attack he was accustomed to make:—"It is right to have an expansive benevolence—to take into our regard the world and the race—but where foreign charity is but a defence against home kindness, it is a base, sentimental sham. Thousands will cry over compressed feet in China who are quite unaffected by souls compressed in America. That religion should compel mothers in India to cast their babes to the Ganges shocks every sensibility of some men's soul, who can see no occasion for grief that commerce snatches from the dusky mother in America her babes, and casts them forth to slavery—a worse monster than was ever bred in the slime of the Ganges or the mud of the Nile.

"A Christian nation jealous of its laws, but careless of

its people—conservative of its institutions, but contemptuous of the weak and poor whom those institutions oppress—are baptised infidels. Christ never died for laws nor for governments, but for *men*; and they who crush men to build up nations may expect God to meet them with the blast of His lightning and the terror of His thunder. The masses against the classes, the world over—I am willing to go to judgment upon that. That gospel which sanctions ignorance and oppression for three millions of men, what fruit or flower has it to shake down for the healing of the nations? It is cursed in its own roots, and blasted in its own boughs.”

This argument was overwhelmingly conclusive. No Christian could possibly gainsay it without doing violence to the very core of Christianity. Christ is the bringer-in of liberty, the supreme emancipator, the Divine deliverer; and they who profess to obey Him and are yet abettors of slavery, either in theory or in practice, openly belie their profession. Religion is an everlasting protest against slavery of every kind.

Mr. Beecher laboured assiduously to the end of the great conflict. Both in season and out of season he was ready to condemn oppression, and to reach forth a helping hand to the oppressed. He was always at hand, with Thor's huge hammer, to destroy every evil measure, and to crush every iniquitous law. His whole heart was in the cause of liberty; and he held it to be a branch of the cause of Jesus Christ.

It was argued by many that slavery lay at the very root of the American Government; that the Constitution itself sanctioned it. Mr. Beecher met this sophistical argument by drawing a distinction between the *fact* and the *doctrine* of slavery. The Constitution *does* recognise slavery as a fact, but not as a doctrine or system. The *fact* of slavery existed before the Constitution; but great care was taken that the Constitution should not confirm or sanction it as a policy or system. Slavery “was a fact,” Mr. Beecher argued; “it lay before the ship of State as a rock lies in the channel of the ship as she goes into harbour; and because a ship steers round a rock, does it follow that that

rock is in the ship? And because the Constitution of the United States made some circuits to steer round that great fact, does it follow that therefore slavery is recognised in the Constitution as a right or a system? See how carefully this immortal document worded itself. In the slave laws the slave is declared to be—what? expressly and by the most repetitious phraseology he is denuded of all the attributes and characteristics of manhood, and is pronounced a ‘chattel.’ Now, you have just that same word in your farming language with the *h* left out, ‘cattle.’ And the difference between cattle and chattel is the difference between quadruped and biped. So far as animate property is concerned, and so far as inanimate property is concerned, it is just the difference between locomotive property and stationary property. The laws in all the Slave States stand on the radical principle that a slave is not for purposes of law any longer to be ranked in the category of human beings, but that he is a piece of property, and is to be treated to all intents and purposes as a piece of property; and the law did not blush, nor do the judges blush who interpret that law to-day. But how does the Constitution of the United States, when it speaks of these same slaves, name them? Does it call them chattels or slaves? Nay, it refused even the softer words, *serf* and *servitude*. Conscientiously aware of the dignity of man, and that *service* is not opposed to the grandeur of his nature, it alludes to the slaves barely as persons (not chattel) held to *service* (not servitude). Go to South Carolina, and ask what she calls slaves, and her laws reply, ‘They are things;’ but the old capitol at Washington sullenly reverberates, ‘No, *persons*!’ Go to Mississippi, the State of Jefferson Davis, and her fundamental law pronounces the slave to be only a ‘thing;’ and again the Federal Constitution sounds back, ‘Persons.’ Go to Louisiana and its Constitution, and still that doctrine of devils is enunciated—it is ‘chattel,’ it is ‘thing.’ Looking upon those for whom Christ felt mortal anguish in Gethsemane, and stretched Himself out for death on Calvary, their laws call them ‘things’ and ‘chattels;’ and still in tones of thunder the Constitution of the United States says, ‘Persons.’ The Slave States, by a definition, annihilate

manhood; the Constitution, by a word, brings back the slave to the human family."

The South maintained, moreover, not only that slavery was in the Federal Constitution, but that it was a Divine blessing, and, therefore, to be upheld at any cost. Mr. Calhoun, the brilliant lawyer from South Carolina, spent his life in the effort to prove, both with voice and pen, that man's chief end was to defend against all attacks the trade in human beings; and he also advanced the doctrine that any State in the Union might annul an act of the Federal Government, which doctrine was adopted as a resolution by the South Carolina Legislature. He argued, further, that it was the duty of the general Government not merely to protect the local States from interference, but to make slavery equally *national* with liberty. He was in fact the very soul of the Southern party; and until his death in 1850 he continued to agitate, in every way open to him, on behalf of slavery as a sacred institution, and for a dissolution of the Union. Under the influence of men baptised with his spirit, the policy of the Government became a slave policy. It is well known everywhere that the Mexican war was entered into and carried on wholly in the interest of slavery. It was through Southern intrigue that Texas was admitted into the Union as a slave State; and was it not under Southern supremacy that the Fugitive Slave Bill was passed? Against all these intrigues Mr. Beecher laboured with his whole soul, his chief endeavour being to quicken the conscience of his brethren in the North. The Fugitive Slave Law was an infamy against which his noble nature revolted with fiery indignation, and which he stigmatised as a glaring insult to the dignity and honour of human nature, as well as an insufferable stench in the nostrils of Heaven. He informs us that he defied the Government to its face, saying, "I will execute none of your unrighteous laws; send to me a fugitive who is fleeing from his master, and I will step between him and his pursuer." Speaking at the time of the war, he said:—"Not once, nor twice, have my doors been shut between oppression and the oppressed; and the church over which I minister has been the unknown refuge of many and many a one."

At this time he might have been called an agitator. Not only in Plymouth Pulpit did he advocate the principles of liberty, and denounce the evil of slavery and the policy of its supporters, but on the so-called secular platform as well. He went through the States of New England and New York on lecturing tours for the express purpose of agitating the public mind on behalf of anti-slavery. He also wrote a series of articles for the *New York Independent*, which were read throughout the whole country. Many of these letters were afterwards published in a volume, under the title of "Star Papers." It is said that when Calhoun was in his last illness his secretary was one day reading him extracts from Northern papers, and that among them was a letter by Mr. Beecher, entitled, "Shall we Compromise?" the object of which was to show the utter impossibility of our having any compromise between freedom and slavery. "Read that again!" said the old statesman as he stood face to face with eternity. "That fellow understands his subject; he has gone to the bottom of it." So he had. Compromise is of the devil, and can do only its father's work. What compromise could there be with men who meant slavery, and who talked of slavery, not as an evil, but as a virtue, religion, justice, and Divine economy? Did not the South itself despise compromise? "Compromise is a most pernicious sham. To send compromises to the South would be like sending painted bombs into the camp of an enemy, which, though harmless in appearance, would blow up and destroy them. Suppose you tell the people there that when their fugitives come North they shall be surrendered? Will you not please to catch them first? You know you cannot. There are five hundred men that run through the Northern States where there is one that stops or is turned back. They know it; you know it; we all know it. The radical nature of the feelings of the North is such that they will hurry on the black man and trip his hunter. If the managers of parties, the heads of conservative committees, say to the South, 'Be patient with us a little longer, do not punish us yet, let down the rod and the frown, spare us for a short season, and we will see that your slaves are returned to you,' do you suppose

there will be a fulfilment of the promise? You know there will not. I know there will not. I would die myself, cheerfully and easily, before a man should be taken out of my hands when I had the power to give him liberty, and the hound was after him for his blood. I would stand as an altar of expiation between slavery and liberty, knowing that through my example a million men would live. A heroic deed, in which one yields up his life for others, is his Calvary. It was the lifting up of Christ on that hill-top that made it the loftiest mountain on the globe. Let a man do a right thing with such earnestness that he counts his life of little value, and his example becomes omnipotent."

His abhorrence of proposed compromises knew no bounds. Looking the matter fully in the face, he felt himself obliged, as a man of truth and conscience, to deny that there was any benefit to be expected from compromises. "My friends," he said, "we are not reasoning about a matter of which we have had no experience. From the beginning we have been living on compromises. Now, there is a history, and we can make scientific inductions from facts, and know the results of certain courses. Do you suppose that if, knowing what you know now, you had sat in the original Convention to frame the Constitution, you would have made compromises? Persons say, 'Are you wiser than your fathers?' Yes! a man that is not wiser than his father ought not to have had such a father, if his father was wise! Our fathers, when they laid the foundation of that structure, did the best that the wisdom of that time would enable them to do; and they were wise men—much wiser, doubtless, for their time than we are for ours. But, nevertheless, we may know now, better than they did then, what their wisest course would have been. When Carolina refused to come into the Confederacy, except on the ground of certain favours to slavery, then was the time to have said to her, 'Stay out.'

"Do you suppose that when Carolina infamously said, 'I will not come in unless you will give me leave to traffic in slaves from 1790 till 1808,' do you suppose that then it was wise for our fathers to give her what she demanded? I do not blame them; they acted up to the best light they had;

but if we, knowing the facts that we know now, had done what they did, we should have been infamous.

“When, later, the compromise of 1850 was set on foot, there were not wanting, as there are not wanting now, men who lifted up their voices in favour of compromise; and I think that very few who saw the effects of compromise at that time believe it to be a cure. They promised finality. They took renewed courage, and with a strong arm of injustice destroyed a compromise still anterior to theirs—namely, the Missouri compromise—itsself a wickedness only paralleled by that which destroyed it. It ought not to have been made; but after it was made, it should have been removed only for purposes of liberty, and not for purposes of oppression. We sold our birthright for a mess of pottage, and the pottage was then stolen!

“We have had, then, a long experience of the virtues and merits of compromise; and what has been the result, except growing demands, growing impudence, growing wickedness, and increasing dissatisfaction, until at last excitements that used to come once in twenty years began to come at every ten, and now once in four years; and you cannot elect a President strictly according to constitutional methods without having this nation imperilled, banks shaken, stores overturned, panics created, and citizens terrified? You have come to that state in which the whole nation is turmoiled, and agitated, and driven hither and thither on account of the evil effects of compromise.

“It is asked, ‘What shall we do?’ We should speak the truth about our feelings and about our intentions. The North should have nothing to do with half-way measures or half-way men. A whole man is good, if he is imperfect; but a half-way man has no place in heaven, he has no place in hell, and he is not wanted on earth! We do not want half-way measures, nor half-way men. We want true men, who will say to the South: ‘The North loves liberty, and will have it. We will not aggress on you. Keep your institutions within your own bounds: we will not hinder you. We will not take advantage to destroy, or one whit to abate, your fair political prerogative. You have already gained advantages of us. These we will allow you to hold.

You shall have the Constitution intact, and its full benefit. The full might and power of public sentiment in the North shall guarantee to you everything that history and the Constitution give you. But if you ask us to augment the area of slavery, to co-operate with you in cursing new territory ; if you ask us to make the air of the North favourable for a slave's breath, we will not do it ! We love liberty as much as you love slavery, and we shall stand by our rights with all the vigour with which we mean to stand by justice toward you.'

"In short, the North cannot love slavery, or cease to love liberty. She cannot conceal her sentiments or restrain their moral power ; she cannot prevent the irritating contrast between Free States and Slaves States ; she cannot prevent the growing intelligence of slaves, nor their love of liberty, nor their disposition to seek it, nor the sympathy that every generous soul must feel, nor the humane and irresistible wish that they may succeed in obtaining freedom. We cannot sympathise with the hounds that hunt them, nor with the miscreants employed to witness against them, nor with the disgraced Federal officers that are bribed with double fees to convict them. The North cannot either permit her own citizens—coloured men, Christians, honest and industrious, and many of them voters a thousand times better fitted for the franchise than the ignorant hordes of imported white men that have cheated their way, against law and morals, to the exercise of the vote—to be subject to seizure as slaves under the odious and ruthless provisions of an insulting Fugitive Slave Law, without providing for them State protection. We will not assist in inflicting upon free territory an evil which we abhor, and which we believe to be the greatest blight that can curse a people. We will not accept the newfangled and modern doctrine that slavery is national and universal, instead of the doctrine of our fathers of the Revolution and of the Federal Constitution, who regarded slavery as local, existing not in the right of a national law, but only by force of special law : certainly we will not apostatise from the faith of our fathers only for the sake of committing disgraceful crimes against liberty !

"Let not the South listen to any man who pretends that the

North will look kindly or compromisingly upon slavery. In every other respect we may be depended upon for all sympathy, aid, and comfort. In this thing we shall give the strictest and most literal obedience to those constitutional requirements which we hate while we obey ; and beyond bare and meagre duty we will not go a step.

“Now, can any man believe that peace can come by *compromise*? It is a delusive hope. It is a desperate shift of cowardice. It will begin in deceit and end in anger. Compromises are only procrastinations of an inevitable settlement, with the added burden of accumulated interest. Our political managers only renew the note with compound interest, and roll the debt over and over, until the interest exceeds the principal. It is time for a settlement. We may as well have it now as ever. We shall never be better prepared. It will never be so easy as now. It would have been easier ten years ago, and yet easier ten years before that. Like an ulcer, this evil eats deeper every day. Unless soon cauterised or excised, it will touch the vitals, and then the patient dies.

“The supreme fear of Northern cities is pecuniary. But, even for money's sake, there should be a settlement that will stay settled. Compromises bury troubles, but cannot keep down their ghosts. They rise, and walk, and haunt, and gibber. We must bury our evils without resurrection. Let come what will—secession, disunion, revolted States, and a ragamuffin empire of bankrupt States, confederated in the name of liberty for oppression, or whatever other monstrosity malignant fortune may have in store—nothing can be worse than this endless recurring threat and fear—this arrogant dragooning of the South—this mercantile cringing in the North. Every interest cries out for rest. It scarcely matters how low we begin. We have a recuperative enterprise, a fertile industry, a wealth of resources, which will soon replace any waste. Let the gates of a permanent settlement be set up in bleak and barren granite, and we will speedily cover them with the evergreen ivy of our industry. But perpetual uncertainty is destructive of all business. That is not a settlement that only hides, that adjourns, that trumps up a compromise against the known

feelings of both parties, and which must inevitably fall to pieces as soon as the hands that make it are taken off. Shall every quadrennial election take place in the full fury of Southern threats? Is the plantation-whip to control our ballot-boxes? Shall Northern sentiment express itself by constitutional means at the peril of punishment? Must panic follow elections? and bankruptcy follow every expression of liberty? And what are the precious advantages which the North reaps, which make it worth her while to undergo such ignominy and such penalty?

"Every advantage that can be reckoned belongs to the North. Ours is the population. Ours is free labour. Ours is a common people not ashamed of toil, and able to make work a badge of honour. Ours is popular intelligence, competitive industry, ingenuity, and enterprise. We put the whole realm and wealth of freedom and civilisation against slavery and barbarism, and ask, what have we to fear? If secession and separation must come—which God forbid!—which can best bear it, freedom or slavery?

"The North must accept its own principles, and take the consequences. Manliness demand this—honour demands it. But if we will not heed worthier motives, then interest demands it. If even this is not strong enough for commercial pusillanimity, then necessity, inevitable and irresistible, will drive and scourge us to it!"

Such were the sentiments, and such was the style of expressing them, which induced the shrewd old statesman, Calhoun, to exclaim that Mr. Beecher understood his subject, and had gone to the very core of it. Calhoun, on his dying bed, perceived plainly that no compromise would remove the difficulties; and to Mr. Beecher, who was conversant with all the plans and aims of the South, the very mention of compromise was extremely absurd. He knew that no compromise would satisfy the slaveholders, unless it meant the enthronement of slavery and the total abandonment of the principles of liberty. "Moral apostacy is the only basis on which you can build a compromise that will satisfy the South."

When the Harper's Ferry Insurrection occurred, the country was struck as by a thunderbolt. John Brown, a descendant of a Puritan carpenter, one of the "Mayflower's"

emigrants, went forth, single-handed, against the great enemy, but was defeated. The raid took place just as the country was preparing for the campaign which resulted in the election of Abraham Lincoln. The Slave Party at once availed themselves of the sad occurrence to abuse the cause of liberty, to misrepresent the intentions and motives of the Republican party, and in every way to damage the prospects of electing a Republican President. It became the leaders of Republican opinion in the North, therefore, to vindicate themselves against the foul charges brought against them. Their position was a difficult one. How could they justify themselves without seeming to go against John Brown and his followers? While the unfortunate man was in prison awaiting trial, Mr. Beecher preached a very characteristic sermon, in which he endeavoured to point out the policy that should be pursued by the North in relation to the South. He very severely condemned any tendency to treat Southern citizens with acrimony and bitterness because they were involved in a system of wrongdoing, to breed discontent among the slaves themselves, to organise any plan to carry them off, or to excite them to abscond, and to encourage anything like insurrection and servile war. He contended that the North had a great deal of work to do at home. How did they treat the free coloured people among themselves? Did they not refuse them the common rights of citizenship? Did they not close all the trades and avocations of life against them? Did they not snuff at them even in the house of God? The discourse caused a great sensation throughout the country, and did much good to the cause of liberty. Speaking of the event in Virginia, he made these remarks about John Brown, which we transcribe in full:—"An old man, kind at heart, industrious, peaceful, went forth with a large family of children to seek a new home in Kansas. That infant colony held thousands of souls as noble as liberty ever inspired or religion enriched. A great scowling Slave State, its nearest neighbour, sought to tread down this liberty-loving colony, and to dragoon slavery into it by force of arms. The armed citizens of a hostile State crossed the State lines, destroyed the freedom of the ballot-box, prevented a fair expression of public

opinion, corruptly usurped law-making power, and ordained by fraud laws as infamous as the sun ever saw, assaulted its infant settlements with armed hordes, ravaged the fields, destroyed harvests and herds, and carried death to a multitude of cabins. The United States Government had no marines for this occasion. No Federal troops posted by the cars by night and day for the poor, the weak, the grossly-wronged men of Kansas. There was an army that unfurled the banner of the Union, but it was on the side of the wrong-doers, not on the side of the injured.

"It was in this field that Brown received his impulse. A tender father, whose life was in his son's life, he saw his first-born seized like a felon, chained, driven across the country, crazed by suffering and heat, beaten like a dog by the officer in charge, and long lying at death's door. Another noble boy, without warning, without offence, unarmed, in open day, in the midst of the city, was shot dead. No justice sought out the murderers, no United States attorney was despatched in hot haste, no marines or soldiers aided the wronged and weak. The shot that struck the child's heart crazed the father's brain. Revolving his wrongs, and nursing his hatred of that deadly system that breeds such contempt of justice and humanity, at length his phantoms assume a slender reality, and organise such an enterprise as one might expect from a man whom grief had bereft of good judgment. He goes to the heart of a Slave State. One man—and with sixteen followers—he seizes two thousand brave Virginians, and holds them in duress!

"When a great State attacked a handful of weak colonists, the Government and nation were torpid, but when seventeen men attacked a sovereign State, then Maryland arms, and Virginia arms, and the United States Government arms, and they three rush against seventeen men.

"Travellers tell us that the geysers of Iceland, those singular boiling springs of the north, may be transported with fury by plucking up a handful of grass or turf and throwing it into the springs. The hot springs of Virginia are of the same kind. A handful of men was thrown into them, and what a boiling there has been.

"But, meanwhile, no one can fail to see that this poor, child-bereft old man is the manliest of them all. Bold, unflinching, honest, without deceit or evasion, refusing to take technical advantages of any sort, but openly avowing his principles and motives, glorying in them in danger and death as much as when in security, that wounded old father is the most remarkable figure in this whole drama. The Governor, the officers of the State, and all the attorneys are pigmies compared with him." [Mrs. Beecher Stowe calls him, "The first great commander, who fought single-handed, when traitors held Washington, and used the United States army only as a means to crush and persecute her free citizens, and help on the slavery conspiracy."]

"I deplore his misfortunes. I sympathise with his sorrows. I mourn the hiding or obscurity of his reason. I disapprove of his mad and feeble schemes. I shrink from the folly of the bloody foray, and I shrink likewise from all the anticipations of that judicial bloodshed which, doubtless, ere long will follow; for when was cowardice ever magnanimous? If they kill the man, it will not be so much for treason as for the disclosure of their cowardice! Let no man pray that Brown be spared. Let Virginia make him a martyr. Now, he has only blundered. His soul was noble, his work miserable. But a cord and a gibbet would redeem all that, and round up Brown's failure with a heroic success."

Mr. Beecher, in consequence of his fidelity to conviction, and bold advocacy of the equality of races, became obnoxious and offensive to a great many of his fellow-beings. The South hated him as if he were a fiend incarnate, and thirsted for his blood. He dared not go south of Dixon and Mason's line except at the risk of his life. He was excluded from half the States of the Union. It is a most dangerous thing for a man to be honest and outspoken in this wretched world. If he ventures to expose national sins and social evils, he is sure to find a million dogs on his heels. Society loves its sins so intensely that it will gladly crucify any man who has the audacity to interfere with them. Every true God-fearing man must make up his mind to endure hot persecution while he remains on earth. Inconceivably heartless and cruel is this world in its treatment of all its

benefactors. The Luthers, the Calvins, the Husses, the Wickliffs, the Knoxes, the Whitefields, and the Wesleys, have they ever escaped the cross? All heroes are martyrs. Yes, truly, to live an earnest, consecrated life, to deny one's self for the world's sake, to swim against the stream of public opinion, to be truthful, enthusiastic, intrepid, uncompromisingly just in speech and in action, this is to be unpopular, misunderstood, misrepresented, calumniated by a thousand idle tongues, laughed at and scorned, and have one's name converted into a butt of ridicule! That was Mr. Beecher's reward for a life-long devotion to his country's highest welfare! But confident that God, and the truth, and all the best men in the land were on his side, he neither lost heart nor ceased to labour. He realised the sanctity and precious application of that admirable motto of the old monks, "*Laborare est orare*," that is, to be engaged in sincere, solid work on behalf of the best interests of one's fellow-beings is to worship God. There is no divinity in cowardice. God Almighty's curse rests upon all the indolent and craven-hearted; and it shall never be well with them in the long run.

Through the whole of the Presidential canvass, Mr. Beecher was an indomitable worker, doing all within his power to secure Mr. Lincoln's election; and when the war broke out it was his heart's chief endeavour to kindle the enthusiasm, and keep up the courage of his brethren in the North. In order the more effectually to accomplish this he took the editorship of the *Independent*. He was thereby enabled to speak his views and opinions to the whole country. Being in constant communication with Washington, and on terms of intimacy with the Secretary of War, he had every facility for an intelligent, accurate, and practical discussion of the momentous question.

Plymouth Church was so enthusiastic that it took upon itself the great responsibility of raising and equipping one regiment, the First Long Island, and quite a host of its young men joined it, and went forth to the battle. Mr. Beecher often visited the camp during the time of preparation, and preached to them. His eldest son was an officer in this regiment, though afterwards he was transferred

from it to the artillery service of the regular army. This was a part of the fruit of his eloquent preaching, lecturing, and writing; and it was a most encouraging proof to his own mind as well as to the country at large that his labour had not been in vain.

But under these continuous, uninterrupted, absorbing exertions his physical nature began to sink. For many years he had been doing more than a giant's work, and it became evident at last that he could endure the strain no longer. As a sign of great nervous prostration, his voice failed. The Church insisted that he should take a few month's rest, and he came over to Europe. At the last prayer-meeting before sailing, he spoke as follows, in reference to the proposed trip:—

“Now, let me say that you must not be disappointed if, while I am abroad, it should please God not to employ me at all in any public ministrations. Verily, I have no purpose formed. I am entirely uncertain as to what I shall do in Europe. Whether I shall shoot through England and go upon the Continent at once, whether I shall abide in England for two or three or more weeks, or whether I shall pursue some other course, I do not know. I have no plan laid. I leave the whole matter to the Lord. I shall follow the Providence that leads me; and it may be that that Providence will not open any door for me. There are a great many doors open; but a door must be of a man's size, or it is not meant for him. I have seen a great many men run for openings that were not for them. If it please God to open a door for me, and to give me to understand that I am to enter, I shall not hesitate to do so. And in that case I have another desire. It is simply this: that I may be permitted to do according to the strength that is given to me, not your work exactly, not my work, not an American's work even, but a Christian man's work. For I hold that Christian manhood is higher than nationality. It is higher than any speciality. It includes everything else. As long as there was no probability of my going to England, I used to say what things I would about ‘those dogged Englishmen;’ but now I am going there, I have an increasing desire that I may do nothing and say nothing that shall not

be in the highest spirit of the Saviour, so that if He were by my side, He might lay His hand on my shoulder, and say, 'Well done.' I do not wish to speak from my passions. I do not wish to speak from anger, nor irritableness, nor vengefulness, nor any secular and lower feeling. I desire to rise up into the moral sentiments, Christianised, and speak from them, think from them, and act from them. And you must not desire that I shall give the people over there a flailing, whether or not. You must not desire that I shall go over to 'show them what an American can do.' You must not pray for any such thing. If you do, your prayers will never get up to the throne of God. Your desire should be this: that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be honoured in my ministration, whatever it may be. Your desire should be that, while I speak with fearlessness, with courage, I shall speak also with an unmistakable exemplification of love. I do not think that anything goes far which has not the wings of love to make it buoyant, so that it can fly. It is increasingly my wish that love may characterise all my words and actions abroad; and for that I believe I shall have your desires and your prayers. The Lord will give me work to do if He chooses, and He will prepare me to do it; but if He has no work for me to do there will be no opening, and I shall go on my way attending to my own and personal and private errands."

God had so ordained that while in England he was to stand up a solitary witness for Him and His children in bondage. He was here to enter on a campaign severer and demanding greater exertion while it lasted than any other in his life. But it was with great reluctance that he entered upon it. On landing, he was met on the steamer by parties who were wishful to make arrangements for his addressing public meetings in the principal cities of England. He declined, pleading that he had come over to enjoy a short respite, not to engage in any work. Having spent a short time under the hospitable roof of his friend and former parishioner, Mr. C. C. Duncan, and a fortnight in rugged, lovely Wales, he went into Switzerland, through Northern Italy and Germany. Before leaving England, however, he sent a letter to his sister, of which the following extract has been

made public:—"This contest is neither more nor less than the conflict between democratic and aristocratic institutions, in which success to one must be defeat to the other. The aristocratic party in England see this plainly enough, and I do not propose to endeavour to pull the wool over their eyes. I do not expect sympathy from them. No order yet ever had any sympathy with what must prove their own downfall. We have got to settle this question *by our armies*, and the opinions of mankind will follow."

His Continental trip proved highly beneficial to his health. A greater treat he could not desire than to be allowed to visit the Art Galleries and Museums of Europe. Having been for several years an enthusiastic student of art, having read nearly all the standard British works on the subject, and being himself in possession of a large collection of pictures and choice engravings, he was quite prepared to appreciate and enjoy to the full the splendid art-treasures of the Continent. He spent some time at the Berlin Museum, which he greatly admired. In his examination of the historical department, which in richness and scientific arrangement is said to be superior to any other in Europe, he was accompanied and instructed by Waagen, the art-director. He was also much impressed by the scenery of Switzerland, and has often referred to it since in his sermons.

At Paris, on his way back, he received the news of the battle of Gettysburg, and the taking of Vicksburg. Speaking of Grant at this time, he said, "Grant is a logician after my own heart." Such news gave him joy unspeakable and full of glory.

No sooner was he back in England than he was again solicited to speak; but he again declined. At length, however, the continued entreaties and urgent solicitations of the friends of the North in this country touched his heart, and he consented to deliver a series of addresses in the large cities. Arrangements were made forthwith; and the greatest excitement possible was produced throughout the country.

The first meeting was held in Manchester, at the Free Trade Hall, 9th October 1863. The hall was crowded to its utmost capacity, about 6000 persons being present. For

the previous fortnight the town had been covered with huge placards, containing most insulting and degrading expressions, the most conspicuous of which was, "Who is Henry Ward Beecher?" It was evident that there were in the city a few nervous and excited partisans of the South who were afraid of free speech, and determined to suppress it if possible. Arrangements had, however, been made to prevent disorder at the meeting. The chairman was Francis Taylor, Esq. When Mr. Beecher entered, accompanied by Mr. Bazley, M.P., and other prominent gentlemen, he was received with all the enthusiasm of which an English audience is so well capable. The following were among the gentlemen present:—Mr. Bazley, M.P.; Rev. Dr. Parker, now of the City Temple, London; Mr. Jacob Bright; Mr. W. Heywood. Many letters of regret at not being able to be present were read from gentlemen well known everywhere, such as Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P., and Mr. John Bright, M.P., the latter writing, "I am grieved to be away from home when Mr. Beecher is in the neighbourhood." The following address was presented to the distinguished foreigner:—

"Rev. and Dear Sir,—As members of the Union and Emancipation Society, we avail ourselves of this your first public appearance in England, after a tour undertaken for the purpose of relaxation, to welcome you, not only as a citizen of a great and free country, but as one who, for a long series of years, has been a prominent and successful pioneer in the cause of human progress. Though separated from you by the broad Atlantic, we have been earnest spectators of your fearless and persistent advocacy of the personal rights of the coloured race, amidst many perils and dangers, unmoved alike by the blandishments of office or the threats of opponents; and also of your consistent adherence to the principles of political and religious liberty. We deeply deplore the dreadful calamity which has come upon your native country; but believing, as we do, that its sole cause is to be found in that sum of all villainies—human slavery—we recognise in it the hand of retributive justice working out the inevitable punishment of wrongdoing, and overtaking not only the Southern slaveholder, whose hands

are imbued with guilt, but our own country, from which you inherited this hideous institution, and the Free States of America which have tolerated its existence. Living ourselves under a Constitutional Government, and having firm faith in representative institutions, we viewed with alarm the outbreak of a rebellion which its promoters avowed to be an attempt to raise an empire on the 'corner-stone of slavery,' and which was essentially a rebellion against free Constitutional Government, and an appeal from the ballot-box to the rifle. The success of such a rebellion would place constitutional liberty in jeopardy everywhere, and we congratulate you and your countrymen on the determined stand you have made to maintain unimpaired the great Republic which has been handed down to you by your forefathers, and thus to present to the world a noble spectacle of self-denying patriotism. We rejoice that your statesmen, whilst maintaining that the restoration of the Union is a sacred obligation, have been led, step by step, to the recognition of the rights of the negro; thus vindicating the consistency of those who have laboured in the anti-slavery cause for a quarter of a century, in the midst of obloquy and misrepresentation, supported only by their firm faith in the eternal principles of right and justice; and establishing for them a claim to the heartfelt gratitude of the lovers of freedom everywhere. In conclusion, we venture to hope that your visit may be the means of correcting some of the misrepresentations as to the position of this country in regard to the American struggle which have been assiduously spread by certain portions of the press, and of cementing the bonds of amity, which ought for ever to bind together in peace the two great representatives of the Anglo-Saxon race—England and America. The cordial alliance of these two Powers may not be consistent with the designs of despotism, or be approved by the enemies of liberty here or elsewhere; but, being one in race, language, religion, and love of freedom, they may thus lead the van of civilisation, and bid defiance to the shocks which jealousy or suspicion might bring upon them. In the firm hope that such a future may be in store for your country and ours, we bid you God-speed in the enterprise in which you have been so

long engaged and borne such a noble part.—Signed on behalf of the Union and Emancipation Society. Thomas Bailey Potter, President.”

The address having been handed to him by the chairman, Mr. Beecher turned to the audience to speak, but for several minutes he was prevented by tremendous cheering. When at last the excitement had subsided somewhat, he said :—“Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the address which you have kindly presented to me contains matters both personal and national.” At this point there was great interruption throughout the vast building, which continued for some time. As soon as there was any probability of his being heard, the speaker said :—“My friends, we will have a whole night session but we will be heard. I have not come to England to be surprised that those whose cause cannot bear the light are afraid of free speech. I have had practice of more than twenty-five years in the presence of tumultuous assemblies opposing those very men whose representatives now attempt to forestall free speech. Little by little, I doubt not, I shall be permitted to speak to-night. Little by little I have been permitted in my own country to speak, until at last the day has come there when nothing but the utterance of speech for freedom is popular.” It was an exciting scene. The mass of the people, undoubtedly, sympathised with the North, and were anxious to give Mr. Beecher a fair hearing; but there were a few minions of the South present, whose only object was to cause disturbance, and interrupt the speaker. Mr. Beecher could not be disturbed. In the midst of all the uproar and tempest he remained perfectly calm and serene, in a realm of sublime superiority. He spoke for nearly two hours and a quarter, dwelling principally on the historical aspect of the slavery question, his contention being that the war then going on was only the culmination or inevitable climax of a conflict between liberty and slavery that had been in existence politically for at least half a century. It was in every way a masterly and most eloquent speech, in spite of the serious disadvantages under which it was delivered.

At the first prayer-meeting after returning to America, he gave the following account of his experience in Man-

chester:—"Next to that in Liverpool, the audience here was the most difficult to manage of all that I addressed; and that being my first public speech in England, it was the most critical period. I saw at once that there was a team to be driven there, such that it would not do for the coachman to be asleep on the box! And then I had it borne in upon me that in my lecture I had better not undertake to follow the course I had proposed; so I laid down my notes, and struck out another plan, and I extemporised the whole speech. For I had two things to do all the time. The unfolding of the subject was secondary. I had to control the audience primarily, while opening, as far as consistent with the subject which I had in hand. And during the tumult and the interruptions (which were far greater than anything you would be led to infer from the reports that appeared), during the tremendous excitement which prevailed, I was so far from being excited or disturbed that the thought of being so struck me as no less absurd than the thought of a man getting irritated in summer while sitting by the side of a persistently babbling brook. It did not seem that that tumult of the people had any relation to me individually." Surely, to be able to entertain such a feeling, and in peace to possess the soul, under such trying circumstances, is an unmistakable sign of true greatness. Small men get flurried, and lose all self-control, in a surging tumult; but great men are, to a large extent, independent of and superior to passing circumstances.

The next meeting was at the City Hall, Glasgow, 13th of October. Glasgow being a great shipbuilding centre, and being also in commercial relations with the Southern States of America, was naturally interested in the great American struggle. Long before the hour announced for the opening of the proceedings the hall was crowded to excess by people anxious to hear the celebrated speaker. The chair was occupied by Bailie Govan, who made a few appropriate remarks, and then called upon the Rev. Dr. Anderson to introduce Mr. Beecher to the audience. "Introduce him to you!" said the doctor. "I intend to introduce you to him. You are already, to a very great extent, familiar with him. All that you need, friends, to make you

more familiar with him is that you should see his countenance and hear his living voice." Mr. Beecher delivered a very admirable and eloquent address, in which he undertook to show that slavery brought labour into contempt, affixing to it the badge of degradation, and that the war then waged in America was one that interested every working-man on the globe.

At Edinburgh there was perhaps less interruption than at any other place, though no less enthusiasm. The meeting was held in the Free Church Assembly Hall. So large was the crowd that it was with the greatest difficulty Mr. Beecher obtained an entrance. A great effort was made to gain a passage for him; but as soon as he reached the chair he was received with loud and long-continued cheers. Many of the gentlemen who had platform tickets had to climb to the Moderator's gallery, and walk along the ledge. Mr. Duncan M'Laren took the chair, and was surrounded by a host of learned and distinguished gentlemen, among whom were M. Garnier Pages, M. Desmarest, and M. Henri Martyn, the well-known historian of France, who had remained in the city for the sole purpose of attending the meeting. Mr. Beecher's lecture dealt with the establishment of the American Nation, and the manner in which two distinct and antagonistic systems—liberty and slavery—had grown and striven for the guidance of the national policy.

The fourth meeting of the series, which was held in the Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool, 16th October, was the noisiest and most disturbed of all. The hall was filled with people, the majority of whom were bent on mischief. They had come for the one purpose of suppressing free speech and insulting Mr. Beecher, and, through him, the cause of the North. The object of the Liverpool speech was "to show that slavery, in the long run, was as hostile to commerce and manufactures, all the world over, as it was to free interests in human society; that a slave nation must be a poor customer, buying the fewest and poorest goods, and the least profitable to the producers; that it was the interest of every manufacturing country to promote freedom, intelligence, and wealth amongst all nations; that this attempt to

cover the fairest portion of the earth with a slave population that buys nothing, and a degraded white population that buys next to nothing, should array against it every true political economist, and every thoughtful and far-seeing manufacturer, as tending to strike at the vital want of commerce, which is not cotton, but rich customers."

To describe the scene at Liverpool would be impossible. The most outrageously insulting things were done—things that were utterly unworthy of civilized and intelligent men, and which reflected very unfavourably on the moral character of those that indulged in them. Taunts, jeers, whistlings, yellings, the cutting in two of sentences, the comic and ludicrous ending of others, the spoiling of sentiments, the turning back of his own words on the speaker—these were some of the improprieties and shameful indecencies of the evening. The speech, as reported in the papers, was quite a curiosity; and in order that the reader may form some idea of the difficulties under which Mr. Beecher spoke, we give the following fragment, which is a fair sample of the whole:—

"A savage is a man of one story, and that one story a cellar. When the man begins to be civilised, he raises another story. When you Christianise and civilise the man, you put story upon story, for you develop faculty after faculty; and you have to supply every story with your productions. The savage is a man one story deep; the civilised man is thirty stories deep. (Applause.) Now, if you go to a lodging-house, where there are three or four men, your sales to them may, no doubt, be worth *something*; but if you go to a lodging-house like some of those which I saw in Edinburgh, which seemed to contain about twenty stories—('Oh, oh,' and interruption)—every story of which is full, and all who occupy buy of you—which is the best customer, the man who is drawn out, or the man who is pinched up? (Laughter.) Now, there is in this a great and sound principle of political economy. ('Yah! yah!' from the passage outside the hall, and loud laughter.) If the South should be rendered independent—at this juncture mingled cheering and hisses became immense; half the audience rose to their feet, waving hats and handkerchiefs, and in every

part of the hall there was the greatest commotion and uproar.) You have had your turn ; now let me have mine again. (Loud applause, and laughter.) It is a little inconvenient to talk against the wind ; but, after all, if you will just keep goodnatured—I am not going to lose my temper ; will you watch yours ? (Applause.) Besides all that, it rests me, and gives me a chance, you know, to get my breath. (Applause and hisses.) And I think the bark of those men is worse than their bite ; they do not mean any harm : they don't know any better. (Loud laughter, applause, hisses, and continued uproar.)

“I was saying, when these responses broke in, that it was worth our while to consider both alternatives. What will be the result if this present struggle shall eventuate in the separation of America, and making the South—(loud applause, hisses, hooting, and cries of ‘Bravo!’)—a slave territory exclusively—(cries of ‘No, no,’ and laughter)—and the North a free territory ; what will be the first result ? You will lay the foundation for carrying the slave population clear through to the Pacific Ocean. That is the first step. There is not a man that has been a leader of the South any time within these twenty years that has not had this for a plan. It was for this that Texas was invaded, first by colonists, next by marauders, until it was wrested from Mexico. It was for this that they engaged in the Mexican war itself, by which the vast territory reaching to the Pacific was added to the Union. Never have they for a moment given up the plan of spreading the American institutions, as they call them, straight through towards the West, until the slave, who has washed his feet in the Atlantic, shall be carried to wash them in the Pacific. (Cries of ‘Question,’ and uproar.) There ! I have got that statement out, and you cannot put it back. (Laughter and applause.)

“Now, let us consider the prospect. If the South become a slave empire, what relation will it have to you as a customer ? (A voice : ‘Or any other man.’ Laughter.) It would be an empire of 12,000,000 of people. Now, of these 8,000,000 are white and 4,000,000 black. (A voice : ‘How many have you got ?’ Applause and laughter. Another

voice : 'Free your own slaves.') Consider that one-third of the whole are the miserably poor, unbuying blacks. (Cries of 'No, no,' 'Yes, yes,' and interruption.) You do not manufacture much for them. (Hisses, 'Oh!' 'No.') You have not got machinery coarse enough. (Laughter, and 'No.') Your labour is too skilled by far to manufacture bagging and linsey-woolsey. (A Southerner : 'We are going to free them every one.') Then you and I agree exactly. (Laughter.) One other third consists of a poor, unskilled, degraded white population ; and the remaining one-third, which is a large allowance, we will say, intelligent and rich. Now, here are twelve millions of people, and only one-third are customers that can afford to buy the kind of goods that you bring to market. (Interruption and uproar.)

"My friends, I saw a man once, who was a little late at a railway station, chase an express train. He did not catch it. (Laughter.) If you are going to stop this meeting, you have got to stop it before I speak ; for after I have got the things out, you may chase as long as you please—you would not catch them. (Laughter and interruption.) But there is luck in leisure ; I'm going to take it easy. (Laughter.)

"Two-thirds of the population of the Southern States to-day are non-purchasers of English goods. (A voice : 'No, they are not ;' 'No, no,' and uproar.) Now, you must recollect another fact, namely, that this is going on clear through to the Pacific Ocean ; and if by sympathy or help you establish a slave empire, you sagacious Britons—('Oh, oh,' and hooting)—if you like it better, then I will leave the adjective out—(laughter, 'Hear,' and applause)—are busy in favouring the establishment of an empire from ocean to ocean that should have fewest customers and the largest non-purchasing population. (Applause, 'No, no.' A voice : 'I think it was the happy people that populated fastest.') Now, for instance, just look at this—the difference between free labour and slave labour to produce cultivated land. The State of Virginia has 15,000 more square miles of land than the State of New York ; but Virginia has only 15,000 square miles improved, while New York has 20,000 square miles improved. Of unimproved land Virginia has about 23,000 square miles, and New

York only about 10,000 square miles. Now, these facts speak volumes as to the capacity of the territory to bear population. The smaller is the quantity of soil uncultivated, the greater is the density of the population—('Hear, hear'); and upon that their value as customers depends. Let us take the States of Maryland and Massachusetts. Maryland has 2,000 more square miles of land than Massachusetts: but Maryland has about 4,000 square miles of land improved, Massachusetts has 3,200 square miles. Maryland has 2,800 unimproved square miles of land, while Massachusetts has but 1,800 square miles unimproved. But these two are little States—let us take greater States: Pennsylvania and Georgia. The State of Georgia has 12,000 more square miles of land than Pennsylvania. Georgia has only about 9,800 square miles of improved land, Pennsylvania has 13,400 square miles of improved land, or about 2,300,000 acres more than Georgia. Georgia has about 25,600 square miles of unimproved land, and Pennsylvania has only 10,400 square miles, or about 10,000,000 acres less of unimproved land than Georgia. The one is a Slave State, and the other is a Free State. I do not want you to forget such statistics as those, having once heard them. (Laughter.) Now, what can England make for the poor white population of such a future empire, and for her slave population? What carpets, what linens, what cottons can you sell to them? What machines, what looking-glasses, what combs, what leather, what books, what pictures, what engravings? (A voice: 'We'll sell them ships.') You may sell ships to a few, but what ships can you sell to two-thirds of the population of poor whites and blacks? (Applause.) A little bagging and a little linsey-woolsey, a few whips and manacles, are all that you can sell for the slave. (Great applause and uproar.) This very day, in the Slave States of America, there are eight millions out of twelve millions that are not, and cannot be, your customers from the very laws of trade. (A voice: 'Then, how are they clothed?' and interruption.)"

The disturbance was so great at this stage that the chairman was obliged to interfere by requesting the peaceably disposed to sit down, assuring them that if they did, those who

were making the disturbance would soon get tired. But they did not get tired, and the commotion did not cease. Mr. Beecher was hooted, hissed, mimicked, ridiculed, and mocked in every way conceivable. The logic of cat-calls was vigorously employed from the beginning to the end. How the blush of shame must have come to many a cheek the next morning, when calm reflection had set in! Were they men, endowed with reason and intelligence, that so conducted themselves in a civilised, Christian country? But Mr. Beecher was not in the least disturbed. "I felt," he says, "all the time that I had a great parcel of children there, and that I was, as it were, a nurse, and was managing them; and I had the feeling of kindness and compassion and sorrow for them from beginning to end." Never had a nurse before such a horde of utterly unmanageable, intractable, headstrong, violent, and brutish children committed to her charge!

We cannot forbear the temptation to quote the concluding portion of the speech, as it contains a few points of great interest:—"I will not say that England cannot again, as hitherto, single-handed manage any power—(applause and uproar)—but I will say that England and America together for religion and liberty—(a voice: 'Soap, soap,' uproar, and great applause)—are a match for the world. (Applause. A voice: 'They don't want any more soft soap!') Now, gentlemen and ladies, if you please—(a voice: 'Sam Slick;') and another voice: 'Ladies and gentlemen, if you please')—when I came I was asked whether I would answer questions, and I very readily consented to do so, as I had in other places; but I tell you it was because I expected to have the opportunity of speaking with some sort of ease and quiet. (A voice: 'So you have.') I have for an hour and a half spoken against a storm—('Hear, hear')—and you yourselves are witnesses that, by the interruption, I have been obliged to strive with my voice, so that I no longer have the power to control this assembly. (Applause.) And although I am in spirit perfectly willing to answer any question, and more than glad of the chance, yet I am, by this very unnecessary opposition to-night, incapacitated physically from doing it. (A voice: 'Why did Lincoln delay the proclamation of slavery so long?') Another voice: '*Habeas Corpus.*' A

piece of paper was here handed up to Mr. Beecher.) I am asked a question. I will answer this one. 'At the auction of sittings in your church, can the negroes bid on equal terms with the whites?' (Cries of 'No, no.') Perhaps you know better than I do. ('Hear, hear.') But I declare that they can. ('Hear, hear,' and applause.) I declare that, at no time for ten years past—without any rule passed by the trustees, and without even a request from me—no decent man or woman has ever found molestation or trouble in walking into my church, and sitting where he or she pleased. (Applause.)

"Are any of the office-bearers in your church negroes?' No; not to my knowledge. Such has been the practical doctrine of amalgamation in the South that it is very difficult now-a-days to tell who is a negro. ('Hear, hear,' and 'No, no.') Whenever the majority of my people want a negro to be an officer, he will be one; and I am free to say that there are a great many men that I know who are abundantly capable of honouring any office of trust in the gift of our church. (Applause.) But while there are none in my church, there is, in Columbia county, a little church where a negro man, being the ablest business man, and the wealthiest man in that town, is not only a ruler and elder of the church, but also contributes about two-thirds of all the expenses of it. ('Hear, hear,' and a voice: 'That is the exception, not the rule.') I am answering these questions, you see, out of gratuitous mercy; I am not bound to do so.

"I am asked whether Pennsylvania was not carried for Mr. Lincoln on account of his advocacy of the Morrill tariff, and whether the tariff was not one of the planks of the Chicago platform, on which Mr. Lincoln was elected. I had a great deal to do with that election; but I tell you, that whatever local—(Here the interruptions became so noisy that it was found impossible to proceed. The chairman asked how they could expect Mr. Beecher to answer questions amid such a disturbance. When order had been restored, the lecturer proceeded.)—I am not afraid to leave the treatment I have received at this meeting to the impartial judgment of every fairplaying Englishman. When I am asked questions, gentlemanly courtesy requires

that I should be permitted to answer them. (A voice from the farther end of the room shouted something about the inhabitants of Liverpool.) I know that it was in the placards requested to give Mr. Beecher a reception that should make him understand what the opinion of Liverpool was about him. ('No, no;' 'Yes, yes.') There are two sides to every question, and Mr. Beecher's opinion about the treatment of Liverpool citizens is just as much as your opinion about the treatment of Mr. Beecher. Let me say, that if you wish me to answer questions, you must be still; for if I am interrupted, that is the end of the matter. ('Hear, hear,' and 'Bravo.') I have this to say, that I have no doubt that the Morrill tariff, or that which is now called so, did exercise a great deal of influence, not alone in Pennsylvania, but in many other parts of the country; because there are many sections of our country—those especially where the manufacture of iron or wool are the predominating industries—that are yet very much in favour of protection tariffs; but the thinking men, and the influential men of both parties are becoming more and more in favour of free trade.

"'Can a negro ride in a public vehicle in New York with a white man?' I reply that there are times when politicians stir up the passions of the lower classes of men and the foreigners, and there are times just on the eve of an election when the prejudice against the coloured man is stirred up and excited, in which the poor negroes will be disturbed in any part of the city; but taking the period of the year throughout, one year after another, there are but one or two of the city horse-railroads in which a respectable coloured man will be molested in riding through the city. It is only on one railroad that this happened, and it is one which I have in the pulpit and the press always held up to severe reproof. At the Fulton Ferry there are two lines of omnibusses, one white and the other blue. I had been accustomed to go in them indifferently; but one day I saw a little paper stuck upon one of them, saying, 'Coloured people not allowed to ride in this omnibus.' I instantly got out. There are men who stand at the door of these two omnibus lines urging passengers into one or the other. I

am very well known to all of them ; and the next day, when I came to the place, the gentleman serving asked, 'Won't you ride, sir?' 'No,' I said ; 'I am too much of a negro to ride in that omnibus.' (Laughter.) I do not know whether this had any influence, but I do know that after a fortnight's time I had occasion to look in, and the placard was gone. I called the attention of every one I met to that fact, and said to them, 'Don't ride in that omnibus which violates your principles, and my principles, and common decency at the same time.' I say still further, that in all New England there is not a railway where a coloured man cannot ride as freely as a white man. ('Hear, hear.') In the whole city of New York a coloured man in any public vehicle will never be inconvenienced or suffer any discourtesy."

The fifth and last meeting was held in Exeter Hall, London, 20th October. The excitement in London was immense. A hall twenty times the size of Exeter would not have accommodated the tens of thousands who were eager to hear the great orator. No sooner were the doors opened than the great edifice was densely packed in every part, and thousands more were trying in vain to obtain an entrance. The adjoining streets were so thronged that no one could pass in any direction whatsoever. When Mr. Beecher came, it was evident that he could never work his way into the hall, so thick was the press of people. After considerable delay he obtained an entrance by mounting on the shoulders of a strong *posse* of policemen. When he appeared on the platform he was welcomed by long and reiterated plaudits, the audience rising *en masse*. Southern sympathisers had done their utmost to create a prejudice against him by circulating false stories about him through the newspapers, and by covering every wall in the metropolis with inflammatory placards ; but utter failure attended their sinister attempts. There was a small group of the friends of Secession in the hall that evening, with the intention, doubtless, of interrupting the speaker ; but all that they could do was to give vent to a few hisses, which were always drowned by the most deafening applause. The chair was occupied by Benjamin Scott, Esq., Chamberlain

of London, who was supported by a large number of gentlemen from all parts of the country, and some from abroad. The Chamberlain spoke of Mr. Beecher in the following terms :—

“Whether we regard Henry Ward Beecher as the son of the celebrated Dr. Beecher, or as the brother of Mrs. Beecher Stowe, or as a stranger visiting our shores, whether we regard him as a gentleman or a Christian minister, and as the uncompromising advocate of human rights, he is entitled to our respectful and courteous attention. I am quite sure that this assembly of Englishmen and Englishwomen will support me in securing for him a respectful hearing. It becomes the more incumbent upon us to do so since he states that the rapid and fragmentary reports of speeches delivered in America, which were flashed across the Atlantic by the telegraph, have been so brief and hurried that they have not conveyed to us his full meaning and sense. He has been very often misunderstood, and, I fear, misrepresented; and as a stranger about to depart from our shores in a few days, he asks for this opportunity of putting himself right with the London public upon this question. You will hear him and judge of his statements, and I am sure you will accord him a fair hearing. I shall myself abstain advisedly from entering upon the subject of to-night’s address. I wish merely to take this opportunity of saying how much I esteem the man personally, and because he has been the uncompromising advocate, for twenty-five years, in times of peace and before the war, of the emancipation of the enslaved and oppressed. He was one of the few thinking men who were the noble pioneers of freedom on the American continent. He was so when it was neither fashionable nor profitable to be so. He took his stand, not on the shifting sand of expediency, but on the immovable rock of principle. He had put his hand to the plough, and would never turn back. Some people had allowed their ears to be stuffed with cotton, some were blinded by gold dust, and some had allowed the gag of expediency to be put in their mouths to quiet them. But Henry Ward Beecher stood before the world of America, and for some time almost alone, and called things by their right names. He had no

mealy-mouthed expressions about peculiar institutions, and paternal institutions; but he called slavery by the old English name of slavery. And he charged to the account of that crime cruelty, lust, murder, rapine, piracy. He minced not his terms or his phrases. He looked right ahead to the course of duty which he had selected; and regardless of the threats of man or the wrath of man, although the tar-pot was ready for him, and the feathers were prepared—although the noose and the halter were ready and almost about his neck—he went straight onward to the object; and now, he has converted—as every man who stands alone for the truth and right will eventually convert—a large majority of those who were originally opposed to him. What the humble draper's assistant, Granville Sharpe, did in this country, Henry Ward Beecher and two or three like-minded men have done on the continent of America. When he heard Christian ministers—God save the mark!—standing in the pulpits with the Book of Truth before them, and stating that the institution of slavery was Christian, he did not mince the matter—he affirmed that it was bred in the bottomless pit. I honour and respect him for his manliness. He is every inch a man. He is a standard by which humanity may well measure itself. Would to God we had a hundred such men."

Mr. Beecher's speech was an attempt to view slavery and the war from an American standpoint. In all his previous addresses he had spoken from an English point of view, showing how the great struggle affected, or was likely to affect, English interests; but in this, his last public speech in our country, he was anxious to tell us what the North had to say in justification of its own actions and motives. The effect was eminently successful. He carried the vast audience with him in every point. Every topic upon which he touched was explained to the satisfaction and delight of all. His reasoning was most lucid and cogent, and his eloquence simply irresistible. The *Times*, the *Standard*, and the *Telegraph*, however, were not convinced, but rather irritated, soured, and exasperated. They laughed, and sneered, and scorned, and then turned aside to take their breath. This was true not only of the London papers, but

also of the great majority of papers throughout the kingdom ; the Liverpool and Manchester papers and the Scotch papers being among the most bitter. The greatest literary genius of the age, Thomas Carlyle, was also in sympathy with the cause of the South. But the mass of the people went heart and soul with Mr. Beecher. When the resolution expressive of gratitude to Mr. Beecher for his labours, and of sympathy with the anti-slavery policy of President Lincoln and his Cabinet, moved by Professor Newman and seconded by the Rev. Newman Hall, was put before that immense assembly in Exeter Hall, it was carried almost unanimously, only three hands being held up against it.

While this meeting was going on within, great excitement prevailed outside in the immediate neighbourhood of the hall. The crowd was so dense and numerous in the Strand as to completely block up not only the footway, but the carriageway as well. The immense cheering within was taken up by the multitudes outside and responded to in the most enthusiastic manner. Calls were made for speeches, and several impromptu speakers appeared, mounted upon the shoulders of willing friends, and addressed the people in favour of the North, and were most lustily cheered. Two or three Southern friends made an attempt to speak, but were instantly hurled from their improvised rostrums by the intolerant crowd. When Mr. Beecher emerged from the hall, he was received with deafening cheers ; and a call for a cheer for Abraham Lincoln was responded to in a most vigorous manner. It was feared that under such exciting circumstances some serious breach of the peace might occur ; and in order to prevent, if possible, any disturbance, a strong body of policemen were stationed in the Strand and Burleigh Street, but nothing happened to call for interference.

On the day after the great meeting in Exeter Hall, Mr. Beecher wrote the following letter to a friend in America :—

“LONDON, Oct. 21st, 1863.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Last night was the culmination of my labour in Exeter Hall. It was a very fit close to a series of meetings that have produced a great sensation in England. Even an American would be impressed with the enthusiasm of so much of England as the people of last night represented for the North. It was more than willing, than hearty, than even eager : it was almost wild and fanatical. I was like

to have been killed with people pressing to shake my hand; men, women, and children crowded up the platform, and ten and twenty hands held over and stuck through like so many pronged spears. I was shaken, pinched, squeezed in every way an affectionate enthusiasm could devise, until the police actually came to my rescue, and forced a way, and dragged me down into the retiring-room, where a like scene began, from which an inner room gave me refuge, but no relief; for only with more deliberation the gentlemen brought wives, daughters, sons, and selves for a 'God bless you.' And when Englishmen that had lived in America, or had sons in our army, or had married American wives, took me to witness their devotion to our cause, the chairman of our meeting, Mr. Scott, the Chamberlain of London, said that a few more meetings, and in some other parts of England, and the question would be settled. You will have sent to you abundant accounts, I presume.

"Lastly; England will be enthusiastically right, provided we hold on, and *gain victories*. But England has an intense and yearning sense of the *value of success*.—Yours ever lovingly."

In another letter, dated a few days before the said meeting, we get an insight into the spiritual state of mind in which he was enabled to preserve himself while in our country. It was addressed, we presume, to the same American friend, and we give it in full:—

"LONDON, *October 18th, 1863.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—You know why I have not written you from England. I have been so full of work that I could not. God has been with me, and prospered me. I have had health, and strength, and courage, and what is of unspeakable more importance, I have had the sweetest experience of love to God and to man of all my life. I have been enabled to *love our enemies*. All the needless ignorance, the party perversions, the wilful misrepresentations of many newspapers, the arrogance and obstinacy too often experienced, and yet more, the coolness of brethren of our faith and order, and the poisoned prejudices that have been arranged against me by the propagation of untruths or distorted reports, have not prevented my having a love for old England, an appreciation of the good that is here, and a hearty desire for her whole welfare. This I count a great blessing. God awakened in my breast a desire to be a full and true Christian towards England the moment I put my foot on her shores, and He has answered the prayers which He inspired. I have spoken at Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Liverpool, and am now in London, preparing for Exeter Hall, Tuesday next. I have been buoyant and happy. The streets of Manchester and Liverpool have been filled with placards, in black and white letters, full of all lies and bitterness; but they have seemed to me only the tracery of dreams. For hours I have striven to speak, amid interruptions of every kind—yellings, hootings, cat-calls, derisive yells, impertinent and insulting questions, and every conceivable

annoyance—and some personal violence. I stood in Liverpool, and looked upon the demoniac scene almost without a thought that it was *I* that was present. It seemed rather like a storm raging in the trees of the forest, that roared and impeded my progress, but yet had no matters personal or wilful against me. You know, dear friend, how, when we are lifted by the inspiration of a great subject, and by the almost visible presence and vivid sympathy with Christ, the mind forgets the sediment and dregs of the trouble, and sails serenely in an upper realm of peace, as untouched by the noise below as is a bird that flies across a battlefield. Just so I had at Liverpool and Glasgow as sweet an inward peace as ever I did in the loving meetings of dear old Plymouth Church. And again and again, when the uproar raged, and I could not speak, my heart seemed to be taking of the infinite fulness of the Saviour's pity, and breathing it out upon those poor, troubled men. I never had so much of the spirit of continuing and unconscious prayer, or, rather, of communion with Christ. I felt that I was His dear child, and that His arms were about me continually, and at times that peace that passeth understanding has descended upon me that I could not keep tears of gratitude from falling for so much tender goodness of my God. For what are outward prosperities compared with these interior intimacies of God? It is not the path *to* the temple, but the *interior* of the temple that shows the goodness and glory of God. And I have been able to commit all to Him—myself, my family, my friends, and in an especial manner, the cause of my country. Oh, my friend, I have felt an inexpressible wonder that God should give it to me to do something for the dear land. When sometimes the idea of being clothed with power to stand up in this great kingdom, and against an inconceivable violence of prejudice and mistake, and clear the name of my dishonoured country, and let her brow shine forth, crowned with liberty, glowing with love to man—oh, I have seemed unable to live almost! It almost took my breath away!

“I have not, in a single instance, gone to the speaking halls without all the way breathing to God unutterable desires for inspiration, guidance, success; and I have had no disturbance of *personality*. I have been willing, yea, with eagerness, to be myself contemptible in men's sight, if only my disgrace might be to the honour of that cause which is entrusted to our thrice-beloved country. I have asked of God nothing but this—and this with uninterrupted heartflow of yearning request—make me worthy to speak for God and man. I never felt my ignorance so painfully, nor the great want of moral purity and nobility of soul, as when approaching my task of *defending liberty* in this her hour of trial. I have an ideal of what a man should be that labours for such a cause, that constantly rebukes my real condition, and makes me feel painfully how little I am. Yet *that* is hardly painful. There passes before me a view of God's glory, so pure, so serene, uplifted, filling the ages, and more and more to be revealed, that I almost wish to lose my own identity, to be like a drop of dew that falls into the sea and becomes a part of the sublime whole, that glows under every line of latitude, and sounds on every shore! ‘*That God may be all in all*’

—that is not a prayer only, but a personal *experience*. And in all this time I have not had one unkind feeling towards a single human being. Even those who are opposed I have pitied with undying compassion, and enemies around me have seemed harmless and objects of charity, rather than potent foes to be destroyed. God be thanked, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“My dear friend, when I sat down to write, I did it under this impulse—that I wanted somebody to know the secret of my life. I am in a noisy spectacle, and seem to thousands as one employing merely worldly implements, and acting under secular motives. But should I die, on sea or land, I wanted to say to you, who have been so near and dear to me, that as God’s own very truth, ‘the life that I have lived in the flesh, I have lived by faith of the Son of God.’ I wanted to leave it with some one to say for me, that it was not in natural gifts, nor in great opportunities, nor in personal ambition, that I have been able to endure and labour, but that the secret and spring of my outward life has been an inward, complete, and all-possessing faith of God’s truth, and God’s own self working in me, to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

“There; now I feel better!

“*Monday, 19th.*—I do not know as you will understand the feeling which led to the above outburst. I had spoken four times in seven days to immense audiences, under great excitement, and with every effort of Southern sympathisers, the newspapers, street placards, and in every other way, to prevent my being heard. I thought I had been through furnaces before, but this ordeal surpassed all others. I was quite alone in England. I had no one to consult with. I felt the burden of having to stand for my country in a half-hostile land; and yet I never flinched for a moment, nor lost heart. But, after resting twenty weeks, to begin so suddenly such a tremendous strain upon my voice, has very much affected it. To-day, I am somewhat fearful I shall be unable to speak to-morrow night in Exeter Hall. I *want* to speak there, if the Lord will only let me. I shall be willing to give up all the other openings in the kingdom. I cannot stop to give you any sort of insight into affairs here. One more good victory, and England will be immovable. The best *thinkers* of England will be, at any rate.

“I hope my people will feel that I have done my duty. I know that I have tried. I shall be glad to feel that my countrymen approved; but, above all others, I should prize the knowledge that the people of Plymouth Church were satisfied with me.—I am as ever, yours,

“H. W. BEECHER.”

On Friday morning, 23rd October, at Radley’s Hotel, between 200 and 300 gentlemen, chiefly ministers of various denominations, met Mr. Beecher at breakfast, upon the invitation of the Committee of Correspondence on American Affairs, for the purpose of wishing him farewell prior to his departure to the United States. Some of the most distinguished men in the metropolis were present, and spoke in

terms of warmest admiration of the guest of the morning. The chair was occupied by the Rev. Baptist Noel, who referred, in a brief but very appropriate speech, to Mr. Beecher's brave advocacy of the cause of the despised and persecuted negro. The Rev. Dr. Waddington then read an address directed "to the Christian Church under the pastoral care of the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher," in which Mr. Beecher was highly commended and eulogised for the brave and noble manner in which he had conducted himself while in this country—"for the service he had rendered to the cause of truth, of right and of liberty, by his manliness, highly moral courage, admirable temper, clear intelligence, sound argument, and above all, by the kindliness of his spirit." It was signed, in the name and on behalf of the meeting, by Baptist W. Noel, M.A., Benjamin Scott, F.R.A.S., Chamberlain of London, Fredk. Tomkins, M.A., D.C.L., and John Waddington, D.D., and carried by acclamation, the company standing. Mr. Beecher responded in a highly felicitous speech, full of humour, Christian fervour, and sympathetic confidence. He felt that he had perfect freedom among those Christian friends, and that, therefore, he could tell them many things which, if told on a public platform, would be liable to be misconstrued and misrepresented. He referred to an incident in his own experience in England which we must reproduce here in his own words. "I wish to acknowledge," he said, "the many kind providences which have attended me at every step since I have been in England. I go home, not for the first time believing in a special Providence, but to be once more a witness to my people to the preciousness and truth of the doctrine, 'God present with us.' In ways unexpected, and as if the very voice of God had sounded in my ears, I have been frequently assisted during my sojourn in this country. When I returned from the Continent I had not spoken in public during the previous twenty weeks. I began my course by addressing about 6,000 people in Manchester. I then went to Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Liverpool. The reception I met with at the latter town was very different from the 'welcomes' of the other centres of commerce. I did not feel the slightest animosity towards the people of Liverpool. I saw that those

who opposed me were merely partisans. I knew that the people of Liverpool were on the right side. I remember that in the midst of the wild uproar at the Liverpool meeting I felt almost as if a door had been thrown open, and a wind had swept by me. I never prayed more heartily in my life than I prayed for my opponents in the midst of that hurricane and interruption. But it so affected my voice that a reaction came upon me on Saturday and Sunday; and I was almost speechless on Monday. I felt all day on Monday that I was coming to London to speak to a public audience, but my voice was gone; and I felt as though about to be made a derision to my enemies—to stand up before a multitude, and be unable to say a word. It would have been a mortification to anybody's natural pride. I asked God to restore me my voice, as a child would ask its father to grant it a favour. But I hoped that God would grant me His grace, to enable me, if it were necessary for the cause that I should be put to open shame, to stand up as a fool before the audience. When I got up on Tuesday morning I spoke to myself to try whether I could speak, and my voice was quite clear. Many might say that this was because I slept in a wet jacket, but I prefer to feel that I had a direct interposition in my favour."

Similar meetings were held in Manchester and Liverpool under the auspices of the Union and Emancipation Society. They were meetings to bid him good-bye; and they were, indeed, farewell meetings, judging by the kindly feelings, friendly wishes, and mutual regrets which were so freely expressed on every hand. Mr. Beecher was beginning to feel really at home in our island, and his countenance was sad when he thought of the departure which was soon to take place. "When I was preparing to go away from London and from Liverpool," he says, "we had a good crying-meeting. The breakfast at which I bade farewell to the brethren of these places was one at which we all had a good cry. I felt as though I was leaving old companions; and I felt a love, not only for those that were there, but for those that were not there, and would not have been there; and my whole heart left its blessing on England—on Great Britain—good and bad—the whole of them."

Two laudatory addresses were presented to him at the Liverpool meeting, one from his English friends in the town, the other from the Welsh people, both of which he acknowledged in his own happy style. In receiving the Welsh address he remarked that he owed no inconsiderable part of himself to the Welsh blood which he had in his veins, that his great-great-grandmother was as fully-blooded a Welsh woman as ever lived, a Mary Roberts. He was also presented with a handsome and costly album, containing about two hundred *carte-de-visite* portraits of the principal members of the Union and Emancipation Society. This presentation was made by J. H. Estcourt, Esq., Chairman of the Executive Committee of said society.

When Mr. Beecher returned to his native land, he felt much fatigued and exhausted. The strength he had gained while resting on the Continent was more than spent during his arduous labours in this kingdom. On his return, a public reception was accorded him at the Academy of Music, when he delivered a very powerful and stirring speech, pronounced to be one of his best efforts. Dwelling upon the state of feeling he had witnessed in England, he testified, without hesitation, that the great heart of the British nation was with the North, and that sympathy for the South was confined almost exclusively to the commercial classes and the nobility. The national Thanksgiving Day soon came, when he gave a characteristic address to an immense audience in Plymouth Church.

Great events swept on so rapidly now that we cannot dwell upon them here. The war continued with all its heartrending horrors till 1865. When it ended, it was estimated that the North alone had lost about 316,000 men. It was an incalculable loss; but 4,000,000 slaves were set at liberty, and converted from "chattels" into human beings. No one rejoiced more heartily at the grand result than Mr. Beecher. The supreme desire of his heart was at last fulfilled: there was not a single slave in the States, and the Union was restored.

By special request of President Lincoln, Mr. Beecher undertook to deliver an address on the occasion of raising the Flag of the Union at Fort Sumter, from whence it had

been taken down by the rebels just four years before. He was accompanied on this mission by William Lloyd Garrison, and a great party of other celebrated friends of liberty. The flag was unfurled by General Anderson, by whom the Fort was defended in 1861. Mr. Beecher's address was full of fiery eloquence from beginning to end, both the speaker and the audience being inspired to an extraordinary degree. The date of this act of triumph is noteworthy, 14th April 1865, the very day on which President Lincoln was assassinated.

Charleston, South Carolina, was a city into which Mr. Beecher was prohibited to enter during the whole period of anti-slavery agitation. He was regarded by the inhabitants as a deadly enemy. But now everything was completely changed. On Friday he spoke without fear of molestation on the occasion of raising the National Flag over Fort Sumter, and on the following Sunday he preached in Zion Church, one of the largest churches in the city, to a congregation of emancipated negroes. How wonderfully had Providence revolutionised circumstances in four short years! Subsequently Mr. Beecher gave the following account of the Sabbath service to his own people in Plymouth Church:—"There was one church in which I ministered myself. It was my privilege to preach in Charleston on Sunday morning at Zion Church—the African Church. About three thousand people were there. Enough of them were white to say that there were white people there. There were a number of officers and a few strangers present; but the great body of the house was filled with the intelligent part of the coloured population of Charleston. I know not that I shall ever preach with such sensations again. I have preached about slaves and slavery; but to stand in the midst of such a great audience, and feel, 'Here they are, and they are now come to life and to light,' struck me through with such sensations as I never had before. One little incident was peculiarly charming to my feelings. I gave out, for the second hymn—

'Daughter of Zion, from the dust,
Exalt thy fallen head.'

You will find it to be an almost perfect description of

Charleston itself. There sat, four or five pews in front of me, seven or eight old men that attempted to choir it—for they were going to be respectable, and sing as white folks do. I did not go to hear them sing so: I went to hear black folks sing in their own way, and was thirsty for the old negro melodies, wailing, half-chant tunes which I had heard so much about. But I got only church music in the first singing. I was obliged to line out the words. I repeated again—

‘Daughter of Zion, from the dust,
Exalt thy fallen head,’

and looked down to see if they were going to sing; and while these men were getting ready, there broke out on my left the voice of a young maiden, apparently twelve or thirteen years of age, in one of their characteristic plantation melodies. She went through the first line before another voice was heard. Everybody looked at his neighbour in surprise. On the next line a few more voices joined hers. And on the next about a third of the audience took up the hymn and sang it to the end. I know not whether this young maiden thought that I had called her when I said, ‘Daughter of Zion,’ but the style of singing in which she led off was just what I wanted to hear.”

The war being now over, and the slaves being liberated, it was time to strike another key in Christian teaching; and the name of that key was, Forgiveness of Injuries. Mr. Beecher’s first discourse on this subject was extremely unpopular. The heart-burnings and soul-wounds were so severe, and of so recent a date, that the exhortation to forgive the enemy sounded very strange. But Mr. Beecher, feeling it to be the true doctrine, continued to preach it with all the earnestness he could command.

It is plain from the foregoing pages that the Plymouth pastor need not be ashamed of his political record. Bravely did he fight the good fight, having on the whole armour of God. He had truth behind him pushing him onwards, and onward he went to the very teeth of the danger, having nothing in his hand but the sword of the Spirit. Was he not, as Mr. Haweis suggests, the Wilberforce of America?



CHAPTER IX.

CHARACTERISTICS.

THE highest force known to us in this world is manhood. Reason, understanding, imagination, will, emotion—each of these is great and powerful, but that in which they all inhere, and of which they are but feeble and imperfect manifestations, is immeasurably greater. Manhood is the sum total, the ultimate outcome of all the faculties of the soul. It consists in the union, combination, and interaction of all mental operations. Hence a man is great or small, in the only true sense, according to the measure of manhood that he possesses. A man of genius is not necessarily a *great* man; because genius, in some of its lower forms at least, may dwell in a single faculty, without producing any effect whatever upon the man as a whole, whereas true greatness cannot exist apart from a state of equilibrium and harmony in the whole nature. Equipoise, tranquillity, and a just balancing of powers are essential to genuine manhood. We are quite aware of the fact that the world is represented by certain people as teeming with sparkling geniuses—intellectual, imaginative, scientific, inventive; but every calm and serious observer of human life is compelled to believe that full, well-rounded, evenly-balanced geniuses are extremely rare. Mere brilliancy of talent passes with the many for real genius. If a man is, after a fashion, clever, witty, keen, dashy, pungent, and

withal well versed in lexicaphanicism, he is at once set down and loudly eulogised in flippant periodicals as a man of genius, an original character, a superior person, a grand and nobly gifted soul, and what not ; whereas, in the true sense of the term, he is not a genius at all, but a poor parrot, retailing the thoughts and sentiments of others, a mere parasite, having no life-force of his own. Genius, like the ocean, is always full, and yet just as constantly letting out. Genius is inexhaustible. The bottom of it has never been sounded. The most extensive knowledge is limited, the profoundest learning can be fathomed : but genius is, like eternity, without a horizon, boundless, immeasurable, infinite. The Divine in the human, the Eternal incarcerated in the time-prison, the Immortal enswathed in a mortal body, *that* is genius. It is Heaven's gift to a chosen few. It is only one in a million that is entrusted with it ; nay, if a century produces *one* true genius, we should be both satisfied and thankful. Carlyle tells us somewhere that the Germans used to assert that all the centuries of history had given birth to but three pure geniuses—namely, Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe. At the time when our much-lamented literary king gave publicity to that severe opinion in England, it was, doubtless, very near the truth ; but we of to-day feel that the German list is incomplete, and would venture to introduce two more names—Milton and Carlyle. These five were seers, prophets, oracles, whose mission it was and is to interpret nature and humanity to their fellow-men. They are destined to live on to the end of time. The nature of things has endowed them with the power of endless life, and therefore they *cannot* die. But even these mighty giants in literature were not all symmetrical and spiritually harmonised men. Some of them were notoriously small in the realm of character. The man in whom manhood and genius were most eminently united was our own native hero, Carlyle. The substratum of his genius was manhood, character, the moral force of his heart-qualities, or, in other words still, the quantity and quality of soul-fire with which he had been endowed, and which he himself was enabled to fan into all-consuming flames. Goethe had an *eye* that saw into the very core and essence of things, and that

disclosed to him the sublime beauties of the universe ; but his *heart* was never baptised with the spirit of total submission to Him who is Judge and Father of all. When we come to study his moral character, we discover at once that some essential quality was absent. While his genius was all-towering, it is undeniable that his moral nature remained to the very end undeveloped, immatured, unillumined by any holy rays from the Sun of Righteousness. Carlyle, on the contrary, was undoubtedly greatest in heart-treasures, in soul-beauties, in the sublime grandeur of his morality. The most noble trait in his character was his radiant piety, his absolute loyalty to God, his total self-surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. The secret of his greatness was the fulness and perfectness of his manhood.

The hero of this little book is pre-eminently great in the realm of manhood. Judged simply from a literary point of view, he is not entitled to stand in the first rank with Homer, Milton, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Carlyle ; but looked at from the standpoint of morality, which is after all the highest standpoint, he shines with as glowing a lustre as any man in history. As a mere genius, though a nobleman of the realm, he is neither a prince nor a duke ; but as a force in society, elevating the tone of its many transactions, and exciting its interest in the supremest questions, he wields the sceptre of a king. As a genius he greatly resembles Goethe, but possesses neither the depth nor the luminousness of the oracle of Weimar. His imagination is of the Shakespearean type ; and although not gifted with Shakespeare's penetration, he is evidently inspired by infinitely higher and nobler motives. In character he may be compared to Carlyle ; and though he does not exhibit the same degree of fiery intensity and glowing earnestness as the Seer of Chelsea, yet he has a clearer conception of the real needs of mankind around him, and of the best way to deal with them, than was ever granted to that great man. In his own sphere, which is by no means a small or insignificant one, Mr. Beecher is truly a mighty prince. But the secret of his greatness is to be found in the weight and power of his personality, which is intensely original. Although all his mental faculties are large, and healthy, and surpassingly

vigorous, he has not attained originality by the exercise of any of them singly. He is not an original thinker, and yet he invariably thinks well and to the point. Nor is he a poet, notwithstanding the fact that thousands of his utterances are highly poetical and exquisitely musical. His superiority has its origin at the centre of his being, where the faculties all meet, and blend, and fall down in glad, solemn worship at the feet of the Divine, which has its abode there. Such superiority, such greatness, is well-nigh omnipotent in its influence on the world. It represents the highest and best in man, and that again is a reflection of the highest and best in the universe—the Almighty. Is Mr. Beecher original, then? Yes, supremely original, in that he has entered into partnership with the Most High, and is co-working with Him in the redemptive economy. In this sense, he is one of the greatest men of modern times. His manhood is of the highest order, and employed exclusively for the elevation and spiritual improvement of mankind.

In the pulpit Mr. Beecher is without a compeer. He is unquestionably the most variously-endowed of living preachers. This is the estimate which all competent judges form of him. The *North British Review* called him, many years ago, “the greatest of living preachers.” The Rev. Dr. Parker, in his admirable little volume, entitled, “*Ad Celerum*,” pronounces him “the greatest preacher that ever appeared in the world.” “His brilliant fancy,” the worthy doctor adds, “his deep knowledge of human nature, his affluent language, and the many-sidedness of his noble mind, conspire to place him at the head of all Christian speakers.” And he has maintained this distinction for the long period of thirty years. Some of those who know him simply by hearsay, speak of him as the Spurgeon of America, thinking the designation a great honour and compliment. But to those who have studied him somewhat closely, he is Henry Ward Beecher, and nobody else. Both Mr. Spurgeon and Dr. Talmage are deservedly popular; but to think of comparing either of them to Mr. Beecher, or *vice versa*, would be the very height of absurdity. Mr. Spurgeon is eloquent, and earnest, and evangelical; but is neither a theologian nor a philosopher. Dr. Talmage is imaginative, intense, fearless, and direct;

but is neither didactic nor profound. But Mr. Beecher, while eminently earnest, intense, imaginative, and eloquent, is also argumentative and philosophical. He takes up a truth and examines it minutely in all its numerous relationships and ramifications, opens it out and invites us to gaze upon it in its inner essence, and then paints it with the exquisite brush of his fine imagination till it shines before our eyes with a beauty more irresistible than that of the rainbow. Mr. Spurgeon moves within the somewhat narrow limits of an antiquated creed, and hesitates not to repeat the ideas and, at times, even the very phrases and technical terms of the divines of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Indeed he often prides himself on his unquestioning, unequivocal, and full adherence to the theological dogmas and formulæ of the past, and is always impatient with those who claim to have outgrown the fetters of the creeds. In his opinion, to renounce orthodoxy is a sure indication of spiritual declension in the heart. Hence his popularity is in nowise the reward of any doctrinal novelty: it is rather the natural and necessary consequence of the subtle magnetism of his spiritual greatness. It is not his theology that draws, but himself, or Christ as reflected in him. His large warm heart, his intense burning zeal, his transparent simple pity, his tender, yearning sympathy with sinful man—it is these that make Mr. Spurgeon such a mighty power in the world, and that, according to some of our liberal, progressive thinkers, *in spite* of the narrowness of his theology. He is, in truth, a man of God. His broad and lofty manhood is wholly suffused with the Divine Spirit. Professionally, Dr. Talmage is a Calvinist, but in his sermons there is no theology whatever. He is merely a skilful word-painter and scene-describer. His discourses are made up almost exclusively of vivid and graphic pictures of the stern realities of life. He preaches with much dramatic intonation and gesture. The strongest faculty in his mind seems to be the imagination, to which he frequently gives the rein to such an extent that it runs away with him. His great mission in the world, undoubtedly, is to startle and arouse the careless and indifferent, and lead them to the Saviour. Nearly all his sermons are solemn appeals to

the unconverted. He very seldom, if ever, feeds the flock of Christ with the strong meat of doctrine, which is one reason why so many Christians fail to be edified under his ministry. Contemplative piety finds neither shelter nor encouragement in the Brooklyn Tabernacle. Dr. Talmage's only message to professing Christians is this:—"The world is perishing; come, let us go to its rescue in the name of the Master." And his whole preaching may be reduced to two little words—"Repent and believe." As a constant revivalist, Dr. Talmage has no equal. Mr. Beecher, on the other hand, is not tied down by any creed. Theologically he is as free as the air. He is a subscriber to no Confession of Faith, nor does he conform to any in his public ministrations. He addresses men as imperfect, sinful creatures, and tells them of that Divine love and sympathy which the Gospel reveals, and invites them to avail themselves without delay of the merciful provisions at their disposal. His popularity, again, is the result of no theological novelties, for he has introduced none; nor has it been secured through any form of sensationalism, for sensationalism of all forms he has always abhorred with fiery indignation. He is popular because of the surpassing nobility, magnificence, and spirituality of his manhood, and that, according to our strictest defenders of the faith, *in spite* of his alleged heterodoxy. One thing is now beyond dispute, that these three men are eminently original, and as unlike one another as nature could make them. Each carries his own credentials, and has no need to walk on crutches, and does not remind us of any of his brethren.

As a literary genius Mr. Beecher is far superior to both Mr. Spurgeon and Dr. Talmage. We have no sympathy whatever with Mr. Haweis, who compares Mr. Spurgeon to the last rose of summer, whose fragrance is undoubted, but who stands blooming alone. Facts stamp that comparison as utterly untrue and incorrect. It is mere dogmatism to assert that the great Baptist preacher is the "eloquent exponent of a dying tradition." To Mr. Haweis himself orthodoxy may be nothing but a tradition; but to Mr. Spurgeon, and those who agree with him, it is *anything* but a tradition: in his soul it is a living, burning conviction.

And the same may be said of Dr. Talmage. What is traditional and unworthy of credence in the estimation of one man throbs as actually true in the heart of another. But, theology apart, it is incontrovertible that, looked at from the standpoint of the literary critic, Mr. Beecher is the greatest pulpit genius of the age, if not of the ages. They who are in any degree acquainted with his published sermons will need no confirmation of this statement. To them it is indisputable and obviously true. It cannot be claimed, perhaps, that he excels in any one quality, or that in any single department of greatness he is greater than all others. Many an orator is as thrillingly eloquent; but to eloquence he adds great profundity of thought and penetration of intellect. Others are as deeply and extensively acquainted with physiological, and mental, and moral philosophy as he is; but along with the knowledge and comprehension of these high themes he carries the power to impart instruction concerning them to the common people, and to make them universally interesting and attractive. We might, in this manner, sweep the whole gamut of pulpit qualifications; but the result would be exactly the same in every instance. It is not in the superior strength or transcendent perfection of any single attribute of excellence that Mr. Beecher's superiority consists, but in the co-existence and co-operation of a great multitude of diverse and opposite qualities. We might almost say that his distinguishing characteristic is *fulness, roundness, completeness*. He is great all round; but in the union and concurrency of all his faculties is the hiding of his gigantic strength. His heterodoxy, which some would regard as the very corner-stone of his manhood, and as the foundation of his wide-world reputation, is simply a concomitant, a mere accidental attendant, sustaining no direct relation whatever to his extraordinary success. It would be utterly absurd to maintain, as some do, that had he remained within the walls of orthodoxy his career would have been comparatively a failure. There is no ground whatever for such an assertion. Some men are so constituted that they *cannot* be orthodox, be the surrounding influences what they may. The cast of their minds will not allow of their accepting the formulated beliefs of any sect or school in

Christendom. They must formulate their own theology, or work without a formal creed, as the case may be. But, be he orthodox or heterodox, a man's success in life depends upon his *manhood*. If he is a great and consecrated man, he *will* succeed, in spite of a million obstacles; while a small, uninspired man, *cannot get on in any case*. Mr. Spurgeon is a complete success, in spite of his orthodoxy; and Mr. Beecher has seen unparalleled prosperity, in spite of alleged heterodoxy. The colour of a man's theology no longer determines the measure of his usefulness.

Now, if consecrated and sanctified manhood is the greatest power in this world, and if Mr. Beecher's greatness consists in his moral and spiritual qualities, it behoves us to consider these qualities more in detail, in order chiefly to discover what are the constituent elements of such a noble character. We shall not be able to enumerate all the elements or qualities, because they are well-nigh innumerable, but must content ourselves with simply specifying a few of the most prominent:—

1. *Cheerfulness arising from perfect health*.—There can be no doubt that between mind and body there exists a very close and intimate relation, which no science can fully explain. When the body is in a certain state, we find almost invariably that the mind is in a corresponding state. Melancholy and dyspepsia always go together. Biliousness is the parent of peevishness and discontent. Moreover, the mind is necessarily in a state of subjection to the body. If the body is seriously diseased in any of its most important organs, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the mind to be buoyant, calm, and cheerful. The operation of this law is universal. Under ordinary circumstances, health and buoyancy of spirits cannot be divorced. Mr. Beecher is one of the most radiant and light-hearted of men; but it is also well known that he has always enjoyed superlative health. In the *American Phrenological Journal* there appeared, many years ago, the following delineation:—“Henry Ward Beecher is remarkable for the soundness and vigour of his physical constitution. Every bodily organ is strong, and exceedingly active. His vital organs are large and peculiarly healthy. Only his stomach is in the least

degree affected, and that only partially and occasionally. His lungs are very large and very fine. He measures under the arms more than one in thousands; and his muscles are uncommonly dense, sprightly, and vigorous. All his motions are quick and elastic, yet peculiarly firm and strong, tossing his body about as if it were as light as a football—a condition characteristic of distinguished men. He fosters this condition by taking a great amount of physical exercise, and also of rest and recreation. When he does work, he works with his whole might, until his energies are nearly expended, and then gives himself up to sleep, relaxation, and cheerful conversation, perhaps for days together, until, having again filled up the reservoir of life-power, he becomes capable of putting forth another vigorous effort. Mention is made of this fact to call attention to the importance of keeping up a full supply of animal energy. Many men fail just as they are becoming distinguished, because of premature exhaustion; whereas a little husbanding of their strength would have saved them. One of Mr. Beecher's cardinal doctrines and practices is to keep his body in *first-rate working order*, just as a good workman keeps his tools well sharpened."

According to Professor Henry Fowler, "the summary of Mr. Beecher is health—health of body, of mind, and of heart, with the consequent elasticity, vigour, freshness, and vitality; with firm will and robust affections. His blood flows free and strong through brain and muscle. He never looks at subjects morbidly; never takes a dyspeptic view of life; is never more solemn than the case demands." It is impossible to lay greater stress upon the supreme importance of faithful conformity to the laws of health than is habitually done by Mr. Beecher himself. He not only has abundant health, but seems to know the full value of it. He regards it as the very basis of morality and religion. Without it, no one can more than half-develop the powers that are in him. It is in itself a joy-giving and cheer-producing influence. It clothes all honest work with charm and beauty. It helps one to see Christianity in its true light and purpose. There are many who labour under the delusion that religion is calculated to make its professors sad,

morose, and dejected, preventing them from participating in the innocent and healthful enjoyments of life ; in fact, that it is a provision for dyspeptics and invalids, for those who are fearful and nervous, for the old and infirm, and not for men in the flush and bloom of health ; but Mr. Beecher maintains, on the contrary, that Jesus Christ came into the world to restore mankind to a state of bodily and mental health. He holds, with Carlyle, that holiness means *wholeness, healthiness*—our “holy” corresponding to the German *heilig*—“and so,” Carlyle says, “*Heilbronn* means ‘holy-well,’ or ‘healthy-well.’” Religion has no fellowship with melancholy, long-facedness, or grim sourness of temper, but is an everlasting encouragement to every joyous feeling and delightful thought. To have a mournful, lugubrious look is no sign of piety, but rather of the lack of it. Among the most prominent of the fruits of the Spirit are love and joy. Mr. Beecher is a bright example of what Christianity can do for a healthy man. He is always cheerful, always aglow with physical and spiritual health. He entertains the most healthful views of religion, and goes about his work with songs upon his lips and hallelujahs in his heart. Morbidity of any kind cannot live long in his atmosphere. He scatters sunshine wherever he goes.

His success in dealing with men is due, in a very large measure, to his cheerful disposition. A whining, stupid, mopish creature is welcome nowhere. Such a one is a walking icicle, curious enough as an object of observation, but essentially repellent. In the ministry he would be a perpetual absurdity not only, but a scourge and a curse as long as he remained in it. To preach the glorious Gospel of the blessed Saviour in the spirit in which it was conceived at the first would be to him blank impossibility. It would be outside of his sphere altogether to lift men up out of their despondency and despair into the realm of serene peace and ebullient gladness. “A true minister,” Mr. Beecher remarks, “in order to inspire his congregation with the noblest conception of a Christian character and a Christian life, must have something in him. He cannot go around with lead in his shoes, nor yet in his head. He cannot drudge and complain. A man of God ought to strike men among whom

he moves as being more manly than anybody else ; certainly, never less. If you are not a man, what business have you in the ministry ? You have mistaken your vocation. You may do to make some other things, but you will not be a maker of men. It takes a *man* to refashion men. You cannot do it unless you have some sort of vigour, vitality, versatility, moral impulse, and social power in you. And if you have these things, how they will win ! How men will want to come to you ! They tell me that the Pulpit is losing its power, that religion is going under, and that science is to rule ; but I will put genuine, manly religion against all the science in the world." Yes, ministerial success depends upon health ; and he who lacks it labours at a serious disadvantage. A dyspeptic, bloodless, complaining, debilitated man has no business in any pulpit, for he can appeal only to people like himself, of whom there is already a superabundance. Every minister ought to be a man of bright, glowing hope, strong, aspiring, unyielding faith, and profound, radiant Christ-like love ; and such he *must* be if he expects to be a success in his high vocation.

Mr. Beecher never forgets to remind his people that God's laws are all equally sacred. When a man violates the laws of bodily health he sins against heaven just as truly, and possibly just as much, as when he violates the laws that regulate his purely spiritual life. How necessary is it, therefore, that parents should look well after the physical development of their children, and teach them in early youth to care for and appreciate their health. Whenever the training of children is the subject of his discourse, the Plymouth pastor enforces especially this aspect of it. How earnestly he often pleads with the young not to trifle with the various forces of their nature, but do all within their power to cultivate and strengthen them. And now, in his old age, he frequently acquaints them with the secret of his present vigour and freshness, and urges them to be as attentive to the requirements of their bodies as he used to be, assuring them that in due time they shall reap the reward. Many people are spiritually unhappy simply because of wretched health. They get into a state of indescribable misery in consequence of doing violence in some

way to their external nature. Mr. Beecher remarks on this point as follows :—

“A great deal of spiritual darkness and doubt is the result of physical causes. I know persons who in health are always confident, and who when they are unwell are always desponding. Physical conditions have so much to do with moral states, that toothache, tic-douloureux, and ague are no more physical effects than these states are. Persons come to me frequently, who I know, the moment I look at them, and before they open their mouths, have come to talk on the subject of religion ; and I know on which side it will be. The stomach and liver have a great deal to do with moral character. And where there is action in the one, and all is right in the other, a person will be far less apt to have spiritual troubles than where they are diseased and refuse to perform their functions.

“I recollect the case of a lady, about thirty years of age, a light and pattern in the church to which she belonged, who had laboured for the oncoming of religion till her devotedness was a theme of admiration among the brethren, and who, just as the work of grace broke out with triumphant power, was seized with evil experiences. The devil would not let her pray. She was in the greatest distress of mind night and day. She wanted to curse God. It was a horrible struggle. Word was sent to me, and I went to see her. I questioned her, and found that she had been labouring out of all measure, and had overtaxed her brain and nervous system, and I suspected that from reaction the chest, the heart, the circulation, everything about her, was affected. And the more I talked to her the more I was satisfied, first, that she was a Christian ; and secondly, that physical reasons would account for these phenomena. I therefore, without attempting to contradict the actuality of her experience—for that would have destroyed her confidence in me—said to her : ‘Have you faith enough in my judgment to take my prescription?’ She said she had. ‘Will you follow it?’ She said she would. ‘Do you before God solemnly pledge yourself to do the things that I command you?’ She said she would. ‘Then I command you not to go, before I give you permission, to another meeting ; and to do as much physical

work as you can at home.' I gave her minute directions about her rest and diet, and said, 'I forbid you to open your Bible or speak one word of prayer till I give you permission.' She shuddered. Said I: 'It does not concern you. You are under my care, and I am responsible for any evil consequences that may result from your obedience to my commands; I put you on your conscience.' I knew that conscience was a strong point in her nature. She was to walk out of doors every day, pay particular attention to her diet, and take charge of her household affairs regularly. Provision was thus made for the diversion and wholesome occupation of her mind, and her restoration to health. I heard from her every day, but did not go to see her. In about a week she became rested, she began to have a natural tone of system, her digestion came back, she slept regularly again, all her unfavourable symptoms disappeared; and at last she sent me a note, saying, 'Come quick; I shall break my promise. I must pray.' 'Well,' said I, 'pray then.' And she did not have any more trouble with the devil, and did not want to curse God any more. The moment she was rested, all those terrors that afflicted her went away of themselves. The simple fact of her being in health of body and mind saved her from any further distress."

It may be of interest to know how Mr. Beecher maintains himself in health and vigour under the heavy pressure of continuous work. In the first place, all his work is scientifically regulated. He does not prepare his sermons on Saturday night. He endeavours not to keep himself in a continual state of excitement. He studies his sermons in the middle of the week, and makes Saturday, not exactly a play-day, but a day of "genial, social, and pleasurable exhilaration." He goes out into the streets, and comes into contact with life in its most pleasing and healthful aspects. He is often to be seen on the ferry-boats, looking at the fine horses coming and going with their heavy loads, or in picture-galleries, examining the works of art, and conversing with the various workmen. Saturday evenings he usually spends at home, enjoying himself quietly among his family. When Sunday comes, he is both physically and mentally prepared for it, and the work does not exhaust nor wear him out.

"I have fresh blood," he says; "and without *training* for condition, I have it. I feel like a race-horse. Sometimes I cannot wait for the time to come for me to go into the pulpit. I long to speak. But this result cannot be attained by studying yourselves up, and coming into church on Sunday quite dry and desiccated." Hence he is not subject to the malady called Mondayishness. His Saturdays and Mondays are inclined planes, as he or some one else calls them; the former leading up to the spiritual heights of the Sabbath, the latter leading down to the toils and cares of the week. By adhering to this simple, scientific method, he succeeds in making his sermons highly cheering and inspiring, their whole tendency being to lift up, comfort, and direct the hearers.

While we are on this subject of regulated work, we are tempted to give a further insight into Mr. Beecher's manner of working. Not many years ago, when addressing the theological students at Yale College, he indulged in the following personal observation respecting his method of preparing his sermons:—"When I went to Lawrenceburg, I went thinking that I would do the best I could. I had the vague general instructions that are given—to 'lay deep foundations, to study thoroughly, and to bring,' as old Dr. Humphrey used to say, 'nothing but the beaten oil into the sanctuary.' I felt that this was connected with regular and incessant study during all the week. I tried to study so. I succeeded in studying, but I could not succeed in using what I had. On Sunday I could not do anything with what I had so laboriously dug out during the week. Of course I increased my general stock of knowledge. Sometimes I would find that after working a subject up all the week, something else would take possession of me on Saturday, and I would have to preach it on Sunday to get rid of it. I felt ashamed and mortified, and began to fear that I was on the way to superficiality. I made many promises that, if God would help me, I would make my sermons a long time beforehand. I kept on making promises and breaking them, and the older I grew the worse I grew; and finally, in spite of prayers and resolutions, I had to give it up and prepare my sermons mostly on Sunday morning and Sunday

afternoon. But then you must recollect that this was accompanied by another habit—that of regular study and continual observation. I do not believe that I ever met a man on the street that I did not get from him some element for a sermon. I never see anything in nature which does not work towards that for which I give the strength of my life. The material for my sermons is all the time following me and swarming up around me. I am tracing out analogies, which I afterwards take pains to verify, to see whether my views of certain truths were correct. I follow them out in my study, and see how such things are taught by others.

“These things I do not always at the time formulate for use, but it is a process of accumulation. Now, by the peculiar temperament given to me, I am able, out of this material, when Sunday comes, and I know what I want to do with my congregation, to bring up some instrument to do it with—some view of truth that will include in it a great many of the results reached long before, by the practice I have been describing, and which are crystallised ready for use. In that way I make my sermons. Another man begins his on Tuesday, and he would be untrue to himself if he followed any other plan. Every man must find out the way he is to work. I would advise no young man to follow my method. It happens to be my way, but it is very likely not to be yours. You can find out, by trying, which is the best way for you to work.”

Mr. Beecher is equally careful in regard to the quantity of sleep and of food which he takes. Aware that many ministers break down from want of sleep, he never neglects to secure his full share of it. He does not gauge the duration of his nightly rest by the time anyone else sleeps. John Wesley may have taken only four hours' sleep, and Hunter and Napoleon so much, but he will not measure the requirements of his nature by theirs. He sleeps to suit the wants of his own temperament, constitution, and work. He shuns night study, as tending to abbreviate life, to weaken the tone, and take away the fulness of the soul's faculties. The same holds good in respect to food. He administers food on the same principle and for the same purpose as an engine-

driver administers fuel, to generate the amount of steam or strength necessary to accomplish a given object. No man has a right to be a glutton, or to eat for mere pleasure. Every man should study his own constitution with discrimination, and determine the quantity and quality of food requisite, and the times of taking it accordingly. They who are extremely nervous should not regulate their eating by those who have the sanguineous or vital temperament. Some cannot eat if they are going to speak, others cannot speak unless they do eat. On this point Mr. Beecher gives us a bit of his own experience. He says:—

“On Sunday morning, when I wake, my first thought is that it is Sunday morning, and the very idea of it takes away my appetite. I go down, drink a cup of coffee, and eat an egg and half a slice of toast. That is all I can eat. There is just enough to sustain my system. Then I preach, and, if I have not done very well, I am hungry; but if I have done very well, I cannot eat much dinner. That is because there is a reaction of the nervous influence of the system. The whole system is working so much by the brain and the nerves that the stomach does not crave anything. Just as great grief, or fear, or any other extreme passion takes away appetite, so does active preaching. Ordinarily, I take but a moderate dinner on Sunday. Supper with me is at five o'clock in the afternoon, and I usually take a cup of tea and a small piece of cracker. That is all I take. Then I go to my evening work, and when I get through, I sometimes am satisfied to take nothing but an orange, which I eat to give my stomach something to do until morning, and to keep it from craving—for often a fit of craving will give one a nightmare as quickly as overfeeding will. At other times I feel a strong appetite, and then I eat. Perhaps once out of five Sundays I eat more just after preaching, morning or evening, than I do all the rest of the day put together. The system indicates it, and therefore I am not harmed by it. It does not disturb my sleep, and digestion goes on perfectly.”

If Christian people paid greater attention to these physical matters we should soon have a much healthier state of society in our midst. At present, even our very religion is

diseased, and all our conceptions of things are tinged with depression and gloom, because our outward, bodily life is unnatural, too highly keyed, and excessively conventional. When we return to a primitive mode of existence, when we learn to take pious care of our bodies, regarding them as the temples of divinity, then we shall have cheerfulness, joyfulness, and true contentedness; but not before.

2. *Mirthfulness*.—Mr. Beecher's mirthfulness is of so high an order that we would be justified in calling it humour. It may not be the most perfect type of humour, but there is more of humour in it than of mere wit, irony, or caricature. Humour is that faculty of the mind which perceives the true nature and relationships of objects, and which enables others to see them in the same light. The essence of nature is intensely mirthful; and he who has eyes to discover that essence, the genuine, original seer, is of necessity constitutionally humorous. "The last perfection of our faculties," says Schiller, as quoted by Carlyle, "is that their activity, without ceasing to be sure and earnest, becomes *sport*;" to which characteristic expression Carlyle adds another of his own, more characteristic still, perhaps:—"True humour is sensibility, in the most catholic and deepest sense; but it is this *sport* of sensibility—wholesome and perfect, therefore—as it were the playful, teasing fondness of a mother to her child." Mr. Beecher's humour is not so rich, sublime, and deep as that of Goethe and Richter, nor is it as profoundly logical and substantial as Lessing's; it is light, genial, gay, and flowing, like that of Cervantes, so pleasantly conspicuous in his "Don Quixote." We do not mean to claim that all his droll, laughable sayings are truly humorous. We have no desire to hide the fact that some of his utterances are extravagant, coarse, absurd, mere caricatures. Sometimes his keen sense of the ridiculous is allowed to run away with his judgment; and when this happens, he is to be seen at his weakest point. But, as a rule, there runs through his discourses a vein of truest humour, which adds immensely to his power and efficiency as a public speaker. It is the presence of this humour that renders his most abstruse and closely reasoned-out arguments so intensely interesting to the ordinary mind.

He penetrates into the very core of things, and by the help of his humour manages to communicate intelligibly his numerous discoveries there to the dullest understanding.

We hardly know whether to describe Mr. Beecher as mirthfully humorous or as humorously mirthful. He is more or less both; but we are inclined to think it is the mirthful that predominates. He is essentially merry, light-hearted, jovial, mirthful; but the fire of genius, ever burning within him, exalts him in all his doings far above the low level of the mere wit and frolic-maker. The background of his mirth is his intense earnestness. Indeed, the meanest, most detestable thing conceivable is humour, unless it rests on a foundation of seriousness. Shallow people are very apt to conclude that the two are eternally incompatible—that the one of necessity excludes the other; and there are plenty who look upon Mr. Beecher as a supreme jester, a sort of religious merry-andrew, whose business is to make sport for the people. Some are so infinitely small that a man of genius, a truly fine and great soul, is an abomination in their sight, altogether a kind of creature not to be tolerated in the Christian Church. To such people Mr. Beecher is nothing but an irreverent joker, an eloquent buffoon, without a grain of piety. Poor souls, they too have their uses in this strange, enigmatical world in which we all live! But our hero, conscious only of his own sincerity, almost ignoring the existence of these supremely worthy critics, exclaims with peculiar emphasis, “Blessed be mirthfulness—it is one of the renovators of the world: men will let you well-nigh scale them and skin them, if you will only make them laugh. There are a great many men who will not go into the kingdom of God if you approach them soberly, but who will go in if you will weave a sunbeam cord of mirth to draw them in by.” But this mirthfulness is not levity; it is, rather, the effervescence of earnestness: and those who are more or less accurately acquainted with Mr. Beecher know well enough that there is not a more earnest man in creation. His earnestness glows with fervent heat; and to his regular hearers, and the unprejudiced readers of his sermons, his humour is simply the forerunner and introducer of the most powerful and

seriously personal applications—the string of his bow, by means of which the arrows are sent home to do their proper work.

Mr. Beecher gains immeasurably more than he loses by the free exercise of the faculty of humour. Those whom he drives away will be better edified elsewhere, where a somewhat different pattern of manhood prevails, and where there is not so much *individualised* earnestness. He draws around him a class of people who are anxious to educate all their faculties, and to bring their whole nature under the influence of the Gospel of Christ. Many of them do not need instruction, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, being already in possession of as much positive knowledge as himself; but they all need inspiration, encouragement, and spiritual culture; and he makes it his chief aim to give to each his portion of meat in due season. His congregation is composed principally of men and women of intelligence, profound moral feelings, and noble impulses, who are also endowed with far-seeing intuitions, and a keen appreciation of the poetical and musical aspect of life. Well do we remember sitting one Sabbath morning, six or seven years ago, in the second elevated gallery in Plymouth Church, which was densely crowded with working men. His sermon that morning was unusually philosophical and profound, but so manifest and pleasing was the continuous play of his humour, so thoroughly did he throw his very soul into his subject, and so full was the whole discourse of the element of personal sympathy and encouragement, that those working men listened to it with the most eager interest throughout, and were evidently not a little benefited thereby, though the logical force and literary sequence of most of the arguments were not visible to them. The only explanation is that he was addressing their inner nature, not through any of its powers singly, but through all or most of them at once. But if humour had been absent, the sermon would have been unendurably dry and heavy to the great majority in that vast assembly.

When he was yet “a stocky, strong, well-grown youth,” he began to give evidence of the most unmistakable character that he was peculiarly constituted, and destined to become

an extraordinary genius. To those who judged superficially he appeared to be a dull, unpromising lad, extremely bashful, with a thick, indistinct utterance, not in any sense likely ever to distinguish himself as an orator. "When Henry is sent to me with a message," a good old aunt used to say, "I always have to make him say it three times. The first time I have no manner of an idea more than if he spoke Chactaw; the second, I catch now and then a word; by the third time, I begin to understand." Like Tenfeldsdrockh, he was "noted as a still infant, that kept his mind much to himself—above all, that seldom or never cried;" in fact he was neglected, almost forsaken, the impression being that he was able to take care of himself. In his earliest years he was not educated and trained, but taught, and commanded, and kept in subjection. But underneath the rough exterior there lay the finest young soul. How interesting it would be to trace the period when his inward qualities were beginning to assert themselves—to watch him at Madam Kilbourn's school, lazily dangling his feet in the air, and saying his letters twice a-day; to follow him when those big girls took him into the tinman's shop, and managed to saw some of his curls off, and when afterwards his parents were compelled to cut the rest; to accompany him to the little town of Bethlehem to the Rev. Mr. Laydon's private school, where he used to rove about in the depth of the forests, listening to the sweet melody of the birds, and trying in vain to shoot some of the partridges, and then in hot haste, at the last minute, was obliged to write out his Latin verb, and, when his turn came, read it out of the crown of his hat; but we must forbear.

When about eleven he was sent to his sister, who kept a young ladies' school at Hartford, Connecticut. Here his mirthfulness began to develop very rapidly. He kept the little company of thirty or forty girls in continuous roars of laughter. His store of fun was exhaustless. The school was divided into two divisions in grammar, with leaders on either side, and at certain periods public examinations were held, when the successful competitors were suitably rewarded. On such occasions Henry was not wanted by either division, as he would invariably throw the whole

division into convulsive merriment. One day his sister took him aside to a private apartment to drill him in the rules and definitions, which he found almost impossible to commit to memory. "Now, Henry," said the teacher, "A is the indefinite article, you see, and must be used only with a singular noun. You can say *a man*, but you can't *a men*, can you?" "Yes, I can say *Amen* too," said the mischievous little rogue. "Father says it always at the end of his prayers." "Come, Henry, now don't be joking; now decline *he*." "Nominative *he*, possessive *his*, objective *him*." "You see, *his* is possessive. Now, you can say his book, but you can't say *him book*." "Yes, I do say hymn-book too," said the incipient scholar, with a cunning, quizzical little smile. At this point the teacher, failing to contain herself any longer, burst out into laughter, which pleased him immensely. "But now, Henry, seriously, do attend to the active and passive voice. Now, 'I strike' is active, you see, because if you strike you do something. But 'I am struck' is passive, because if you are struck you don't do anything, do you?" "Yes I do—I strike back again."

There was a Natural Philosophy Class in this female seminary, and Henry used to attend it. The subject of their cogitations one day was the theory of the tides. The little ladies did not quite see their way through the difficulty, and they were getting rather nervous over it. At length, however, Henry volunteered to help them, and to enlighten the teacher at the same time. "I can explain that," said he, with swelling pride. "Well, you see, the sun catches hold of the sea, and pulls that, and this makes the spring tides." "But what makes the neap tides?" "Oh, that's when the sun stops to spit on his hands." But such sallies as these could not be endured. By his irrepressible jokes he was spoiling the whole school; and in about a year his sister was compelled to send him home as an inveterate joker, and also, it must be confessed, as a bad scholar.

The same characteristic, in a more ripened and intelligent form, marked him throughout his academical career. He was quite an expert in mimicry, and proverbially quick in repartee. All the students loved and sought him. He was always the centre of a company whose supreme object was

to enjoy themselves and be merry. The merriment was invariably of the most healthy and innocent character, and it made all who indulged in it the happiest creatures in the world. It was the sort of hilarity which kind nature fostered and justified in her children, and which she ever does foster and nourish in all those who enjoy perfect health. But there is one practical joke played by Henry Ward on the head tutor of his class which we must give here. This said tutor was in many ways a most remarkable personage. He was almost seven feet in height, lean, gaunt, hungry, with a face of incredible length. His solemnity was a universal terror, though silently many of the students thought it was merely put on for expediency's sake. The tempestuous merriment which was becoming such a conspicuous element in the college was a source of no inconsiderable anxiety to our tall and solemn tutor. Was not his righteous soul vexed and sorely tried within him? At length he resolved to put an end to the much prevailing evil; and as Beecher was known to be at the head of it, the good man decided to go and see him in his own room, and there reprove him for his great wickedness. Mr. Beecher was by some means apprised of the intended visit, and of its object, and great was the inward joy wherewith he anticipated it. He knew well enough that the professor was not thoroughly genuine, that he wore a mask in order to hide his real self; that at heart he was as fond of fun and frolic as anybody, and that under heavy trial his hypocrisy would forsake him. To adopt the eloquent language of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was perhaps the first to give publicity to this incident:—"He knew that at heart he was a deplorable wag, a mere whited sepulchre of conscientious gravity, with measureless depths of unrenewed chuckle hid away in the depths of his heart. When apprised of his actual approach, he suddenly whisked into the wood-closet all the chairs in his room, with the exception of a low one, which had been sawed off at the second joint, so that it stood about a foot from the floor. Then he crawled through the hole in his table, and, seated meekly among his books, awaited the visit." Mr. Beecher, it appears, had made for himself a circular table, with a hole in the middle, where a seat was

fixed. "A grave rap is heard :—'Come in.' Far up in the air the solemn dark face appears. Mr. Beecher rose ingenuously, and offered to come out. 'No, never mind,' says the visitor, 'I just came to have a little conversation with you. Don't move.' 'Oh,' says Beecher, innocently, 'pray sit down, sir,' indicating the only chair.

"The tutor looked apprehensively, but began the process of sitting down. He went down, down, down, but still no solid ground being gained, straightened himself, and looked uneasy.

"'I don't know but that chair is too low for you,' said Beecher meekly; 'do let me get you another.'

"'Oh, no, no, my young friend, don't rise; don't trouble yourself, it is perfectly agreeable to me—in fact I like a low seat,' and with these words the tall man doubled like a jack-knife, and was seen sitting with his grave face between his knees, like a grasshopper drawn up for a spring. He heaved a deep sigh, and his eyes met the eyes of Mr. Beecher. The native spark of natural depravity within him was exploded by one glance at those merry eyes, and he burst into a loud roar of merriment, which the two continued for some time, greatly to the amusement of the boys who were watching to hear how Beecher would come out with his lecture. The chair was known in college afterwards by the surname of 'The Tutor's Delight.'

While at Lane Theological Seminary, if we remember rightly, he was on terms of close intimacy with Professor Stowe. They occupied the same apartments and slept in the same bed. One cold winter morning Beecher could not be prevailed upon to get up in time to attend prayers at the Seminary Chapel. The Professor urged, and coaxed, and shouted, but the slothful slumberer would not stir. Somewhat indignant, the worthy teacher gave up in despair, and started, lest he, too, would be late; it was his turn that morning to preside. But no sooner was he outside the door than Beecher jumped up, washed and dressed "with all swift despatch," took the shortest cut and ran with all his might, and was in his seat two or three seconds before Professor Stowe made his appearance at the desk, who, when he saw him, was astonished beyond measure.

This joking propensity did not forsake him when he entered upon the duties of active life, but became a more notable characteristic still. It has followed him to this day. When he was at Indianapolis, the ministers of the town were accustomed to meet occasionally at a certain shop, where they discussed the news of the day, and tried each other with innocent practical jokes. Mr. Beecher was a constant visitor at this classical rendezvous of reverend gentlemen, and all looked upon him as the chief character. He was now a most zealous worker in connection with missions, and it was his habit to ride long distances to preach in outlying, neglected districts. During one of these missionary journeys, while crossing a river, he was thrown over the horse's head and pitched headlong into the water. The accident became known in the town, and the Baptist minister thought he would make good use of it the next time they met at the store. So at the very next meeting, as soon as Mr. Beecher entered, the Baptist brother said :—

“Oh, ho, Brother Beecher, glad to see you ! I thought you'd have to come into our way at last. You've been immersed ; you are as good as any of us now.”

“Poh, poh,” answered Mr. Beecher deliberately ; “my immersion is a different thing from that of your converts. You see I was immersed by a *horse*, not by an ass.”

A Methodist minister once accosted him and said, “Well, now, really Brother Beecher, what have you against Methodist doctrines ?”

“Nothing, only that your converts practice them.”

“Practice them ?” asked the poor man, bewildered.

“Yes ; you preach falling from grace, and your converts practice it with a vengeance.”

As he was once sitting at table, the Episcopal minister called to ask for the loan of his horse for the day. To the messenger that brought the request to him he said, “Stop, stop, there is something to be attended to first,” and rising in great haste from the table, went out to the gate, and took the clergyman's arm, as if something very important was going to happen. “Now, Brother G——, you want to borrow my horse for a day, do you ? Well, you see, it lies on my mind greatly that you don't admit my ordination. Now, if

you'll admit that I am a genuinely ordained minister, you shall have my horse ; but if not, I don't know about it."

A particularly good story concerning him went the round of the papers a few months ago. It seems that General Grant went to Plymouth Church for the purpose of hearing him. As was very natural, the people recognised him, and despite their professed democracy, were anxious to do him public homage. It is said that Mr. Beecher preached that morning unusually well. But after the service was over, the bulk of the congregation waited to see the gallant soldier and ex-President retire. The General waited too, wondering, perhaps, why the people did not leave, and wishing for an opportunity to go out himself quietly. Informed of the state of matters in the church, Mr. Beecher returned to the platform and said, having first requested the audience to leave :—"A special service can be held, if you wish to worship a man. This house is for the worship of God." What a cutting, withering rebuke !

Hundreds of anecdotes like the preceding are in circulation about him. He hardly ever opens his mouth without saying something witty and eccentric. But these sayings are but drops out of the ocean-fulness of real humour that exists within him. He is humorous all the time. His deepest thoughts, his most solemn warnings, his most earnest appeals, and his grandest arguments, are all humorous in the highest and sacredest sense of the word. He lives in mirthfulness as in an atmosphere congenial to his soul. It is only occasionally, and that by the exceeding aptness of his illustrations, that he overpowers the risibles of his audience. "Those sensations which more than once in a discourse run electrically through his audience—a murmur and a thrill, which is a shadow of applause—are the consequence, not of a funny speech, nor of an indecorous speech, but of a good illustration, which, by its originality and aptness, pictures to the mind the abstract truth in such living light that the heart inevitably throbs quicker." As an instance of this faculty of aptly illustrating great truths and facts, we might mention his famous speech at the Metropolitan meeting, to celebrate the passage of the Maine Law. When he was completely absorbed in the subject,

and when his eloquence was at the highest pitch possible, he said :—"They say that there will be a reaction against the Maine Law. Reaction! We cannot go back! You might as well try to crowd a full-grown chicken back into its shell." In a Lecture-Room talk, many years ago, he was dwelling upon the connection between freedom and religious institutions in Kansas, at the time when that State was undergoing its first troubles. He said :—"I am a peace man. I believe in moral suasion. I want to see Kansas covered with churches, and tracts, and Bibles; but just now I know of nothing so likely to keep the peace as a good supply of Sharp's rifles. It is wonderful the amount of moral suasion they have over those Missourians. 'Send the Bible,' do you say, to those Border Ruffians? Why, the Bible is addressed to the conscience, and they haven't any. You might as well read the Bible to a herd of buffaloes."

Most of the preceding anecdotes belong to Mr. Beecher's earlier years, when his mirthfulness was wild, turbulent, ungoverned, and unrefined. In these later years he is less impetuous and precipitate, not so much given to boldness of illustration and vivacity of style; but his humour is more perfect now than it was at any former period. It is deeper and quieter, more majestic and sublime. As he has grown in spirituality and true piety, he has improved as a preacher and orator. Anyone comparing the sermons delivered twenty years ago with those he preaches to-day will observe a marked difference. There is more movement in the former, more of the fiery, all-consuming element, but there is much more ripeness of conviction and of experience in the latter. In the former, humour dallies rather too freely with wit; in the latter, wit has blossomed into real humour.

3. *Naturalness*.—His humour, wit, mirthfulness, or whatever else we may be pleased to call it, is real, not affected; a part of himself, and not something put on for dramatic effect. He is in every sense a child of Nature; a full-grown man, yet possessing and exhibiting still the genuineness and simplicity of infancy. He has not been cast in the mould of conventionalism. More than once, in the course of this essay, have we pointed to the fact that he is intensely himself in all things. He is not a copyist, but an original composer.

The greatest bane of society in our day is unnaturalness, which is the worst form of falsehood and dishonesty. We are all imitating one another. There is scarcely one in a thousand that leads an original, independent life. Our very environments have become the shapers of our character and destiny. Did we know that society was insane (as indeed it is in many respects), there is hardly a man among us who would have the courage to continue sane. According to our newest creed, it is infinitely better to be out of the world than out of the fashion. Fashion is the greatest despot this earth has ever seen: it is a god which most of us worship with pious reverence. We are its willing slaves and dupes. Where can we any longer find the grand simplicity of the patriarchal period? Where, to-day, can we discover a life that is not artificial, and, to a great extent, false? Shams, humbugs, hypocrisies, as Carlyle tells us, and will ever continue to tell us, sit on glittering thrones everywhere. Our English life is false and rotten to its very core. Yet empty pretences, foul equivocalities, and impious prevarications, because fashionable, are not only tolerated and winked at, but resorted to and practised by those who call themselves honest, true, and reliable. What will become of us at last is a most puzzling problem at present. Some one has actually written a volume and christened it "The World of Cant." The critics assure us that it was composed out of pure spite, by some sorely disappointed man, and there may be truth in the allegation; but one thing is incontrovertible, that the world is full of cant—not any particular world, not the world of the Metropolitan Congregational Pulpit, but the world of which we ourselves, including the authors of such books as "The World of Cant," form a part. We have all departed from Nature and Nature's laws, and it shall not be well with us until we return to both.

But in the midst of all this conventionality and artificialness, Mr. Beecher stands out a bright example of veracity, naturalness, and sincerity. He does nothing because other people do it. He cares not whether he is in the fashion or out of it, if he is only right. For the last thirty-five years his face has been resolutely set against the absurd and wicked

customs and practices of modern life ; and he has the satisfaction of knowing that his efforts have not been entirely in vain.

Independence is his chief characteristic as a theologian. He is the disciple of no man. He looks into the Bible through his own eyes, and uses his own judgment as to what interpretation to put upon its various statements. He finds, as a rule, that God interprets Himself to every inquiring mind, and that, when His own interpretation is not granted, it is better to wait with patience and in silence. He calls no one Master upon the earth. If other people agree with him, he rejoices ; but if he has to stand alone, he is not sad. If in studying books he receives enlightenment on any topic, he is thankful ; but he adopts no opinion, however ably and plausibly advanced, unless it amply commends itself to his own reason and conscience. In his public ministrations his object has always been to bring men into sympathy, not with any Confession of Faith or formulated creed, not with any particular form of Church government, but with God and His truth, with eternity and its interests. Slavish adherence to human dogmas is to him both ridiculous and abominable. He exhorts all men to construct their own theology, deferring only to the voice of God as expressed in the Bible, in Nature, or in their own souls. Very eloquent and scathing has been his denunciation of conventional theology, and excessively severe has been his condemnation of traditionary theologians ; but his object is praiseworthy. We want a return to Nature in this as well as in everything else.

Mr. Beecher's naturalness has been most marked, perhaps, in the breadth and purity of his sympathies. He sees in every human being a brother ; and although all men are sinners, yet there is scarcely a living person but has his good qualities, which he is ever eager to recognise. He believes, preaches, and practices the doctrine of the universal brotherhood of mankind. "I know few more sublime ideas," says a distinguished philosopher, "than the idea of this universal interaction of the whole human race on itself ; this ceaseless life and activity ; this eager emulation to give and to receive—the noblest strife in which man can take a

part ; this general interaction of countless wheels into each other, whose common motive-power is freedom—and the beautiful harmony which is the result of all. ‘Whoever thou art,’ may each of us say, ‘Whoever thou art, if thou bear the form of man, thou too art a member of this great commonwealth : through what countless media soever our mutual influence may be transmitted, still by that title I act upon thee, and thou on me ; no one who bears the stamp of reason on his front, however rudely impressed, exists in vain for me. But I know thee not—thou knowest not me ! Oh ! so surely as we have a common calling to be good—ever to become better, so surely—though millions of ages may first pass away (what is time !)—so surely shall a period at last arrive when I may receive thee too into my sphere of action—when I may do good to thee, and receive good from thee in return ; when my heart may be united to thine also, by the fairest possible bonds—a mutual interchange of free and generous love.’” This philosophy is a fundamental Christian sentiment which every true follower of Christ possesses and exhibits, at least to some extent, and which Mr. Beecher glories in as being the very heart of the Gospel. He regards every man, whatever his condition, history, or experience may be, as a child of God, for whom the Saviour died, and to whom he as a Christian minister has a message. Conventionalism, on the other hand, looks down upon the poor, the vicious, and the outcast with contempt and disdain, and says of them, “Keep them at arm’s length, tread on them, point the finger of scorn at them, let them feel their misery more and more, and drink to the very dregs the bitter cup of black despair.” This spirit of exclusiveness and class-separation is continually present in the Christian Church. But Mr. Beecher has risen above it, and seeks, like the blessed Master, to identify himself with man everywhere and in every state, saying to him, “There is hope for thee in God ; thy Father yearns towards thee with infinite compassion, and will save thee from all thy sins. Come to Him and trust Him, and life shall be clothed with a new significance to thee.” He has none of the spirit which animated the prophet Jonah in his attitude towards the Ninevites. Jonah was a member of the narrow, exclusive,

conventional class. He was the happiest of men as long as he continued to perambulate the streets, crying at the top of his voice, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown;" but no sooner did he learn that the whole city had prostrated itself in dust and ashes, and that God had turned away from His fierce anger, than he fell into a peevish, angry mood, and began to murmur against the Lord, saying, "I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the evil." Mr. Beecher fosters quite the contrary spirit, and rejoices with exceeding joy when the prodigal son comes to himself in the far country and begins to long for home. He helps, encourages, urges, and cheers him on till he finds himself under his Father's roof once more.

Society has no good word to say of those who are engaged in questionable professions or trades. If they do noble deeds, if they distinguish themselves in some form of excellence, the conventional world will throw suspicion upon their motive, or, perhaps, ignore them altogether. But Mr. Beecher is very quick to acknowledge merit in whatever sphere of life it exists. We give the following as a specimen:—"While I was yet a young man, living in Cincinnati, there came a wandering circus there, in which one of the principal athletes was a man built like a second Apollo. He was magnificent in every physical excellence, and as handsome as a god. A young lady of one of the first families there, attracted by his beauty and grace, became enamoured of him. He, of course, complimented, reciprocated this wild attachment. And in the enthusiasm and ardour of her unregulated and foolish affection she proposed an elopement to him. Ordinarily, a man would have been more than proud—because she was heir to countless wealth, apparently, and certainly stood second to none there; but with an unexpected manliness, that surprised every one, he said to her, 'No, I cannot afford to have you despise me. I am older than you are, and, although I am highly complimented and pleased, by-and-by you would reproach me, and say that I ought to have taught you better, and ought to have done otherwise. I will carry you back to your friends. I will not permit you to sacrifice yourself on me.' And he refused

to take advantage of the opportunity which she offered him." The surroundings of this young man were as unfavourable as they could be, there was no encouragement to nobility of soul in the trade that he followed; but in spite of his outward disadvantages, he was the possessor of admirable qualities. He was magnanimous, disinterested, and extraordinarily conscientious; and Mr. Beecher was not ashamed to speak of him and his manly traits in a Sabbath morning sermon.

This simplicity of character is observable in all the departments of his life. He is the same in the street as in the pulpit. He gives his higher nature fair play at all times and in all places. "There is hardly a little by-way or alley in the great 'City of Life' into which he does not enter at some time or other. There is something of the genial Socrates spirit about him. He will be everywhere a man amongst men. We can imagine him in the midst of just such scenes as the wandering philosopher of old loved to frequent. Here is a crowd gathering; but who is this fine, muscular fellow, courteously but firmly pushing his way into the centre of it, to find out what is the matter? Some one has fallen down in the street—that is all. Drunk or in a fit? That interests Mr. Beecher—it is his business; at all events to the nearest 'store' the man must be taken—must be taken in—must be taken care of."

When men discover that a minister is honest, sincere, open, transparent, and not a mere hireling, they at once come under his power and influence, and begin to be moulded and transformed by the spell of his sanctified manhood. This discovery was soon made respecting Mr. Beecher; and that is one reason why he has such a hold upon the public mind, and is so successful in winning souls to the loving Saviour.

4. *Intuition*.—This is a faculty possessed only by great men. Very few ministers of the Gospel have it. The great bulk of mankind are mere memorisers, repeaters of truths and facts they have learned by rote, or in some other mechanical way received into themselves from outside, not of things heard by the inward ear and seen by the spiritual eye. Their minds cannot work save through the medium of

the bodily senses. They have no double vision, no twofold hearing, no souls of transcendent, independent potency. They can observe and remember, hear and catch, the first outward meaning, see and form mental images of the objects just as they present themselves to the material eye; but it is not within their power to translate, interpret, intelligibly decipher, and behold in their own majestic splendour the great ineffable verities of God's universe. They lack intuition, the power of immediate perception. They are literalists, who live exclusively on the surface. They can discover only forms and shapes, only the external, physical aspect of things, the indwelling thoughts and forces never. Their talk is alone about phenomena, the things that happen and are apparent, scarcely ever about the living soul that causes, and regulates, and inheres in all phenomena. But the man of intuition is characterised by intense inwardness. He lives by faith, being in constant fellowship, not with the body of the universe, but with its inner life and power, with its energising, animating, and all-sustaining spirit. Other men must depend upon hearsay for their knowledge of the sublime principles that give adhesion and harmony to creation, while the man of imagination enjoys direct communion with them. Spiritual entities of all kinds are both real and present to him. Is not he himself a drop from the boundless ocean of eternity? Are there no affinities between him and all the higher forms of existence? Yes; his life, too, is limitless, and his soul a spark from off the altar of immortality.

Common, uninspired men, if earnest and pious, may be very useful in their day and generation. Indeed, as a matter of course and sheer necessity, the major part of the world's practical work must be done by ordinary people, for there are no others to do it. We may all take comfort from the fact, that in order to render useful service in the vineyard of the Church we need not be great geniuses. And yet, when a highly-endowed spirit makes its appearance, it should be regarded as an inestimable blessing. We want somebody to see for us, to hear for us, and to feel for us. It is absolutely necessary that somebody should unlock the treasury of eternity, and bring forth things old and new for

our guidance and comfort. We need men to interpret ourselves to us ; to tell us what manner of creatures we are, and to call out into action and intelligibility the longings and aspirations that lie buried at the bottom of our hearts. One will do for a million of us ; but he must be genuine, a very son of God. Such a one, undoubtedly, is Mr. Beecher. He is a great seer, and has the gift of making others see.

In the higher realms, intuition or imagination, and faith, are synonymous terms, signifying the power to realise the invisible and eternal. In its lower forms, this is a power common to all the saints, while in its most exalted operation it is confined to a chosen few. It is one of Mr. Beecher's strong points. To him God is everywhere visible, creation being, as it were, His body. To him Jesus Christ is ever present, ready to save, succour, and guide. The future life is to him an undoubted, precious reality. And he is blessed with the further power of making these high themes real to others. In his preaching he turns himself inside out, and all his hearers are made to feel that the things about which he speaks are not delusions, but stupendous realities.

Many other characteristics might be mentioned, such as common sense, which is one of the rarest of gifts, affluence of resource, sympathy with nature, profound piety, etc., etc. ; but all these have been touched upon more or less already : it is not necessary to dwell upon them here. Enough has been written, we trust, to justify the claim that Henry Ward Beecher is one of the "Memorable Men of the Nineteenth Century."

We lay down our pen in the hope that there are yet in store for our hero many years of useful work. Though under a rapidly western sun, all his faculties seem to be as vigorous and fresh as ever. May his afternoon and evening be bright and calm. Cannot we all say, Amen?



CHAPTER X.

THE CLOSE OF A GOOD LIFE.

THE thread of this narrative (dropped at the time when Henry Ward Beecher, a man in the prime of life, was rejoicing in the fulfilment of his very heart's desire—the liberation of the slaves)—is taken up more than twenty years later. The long, brilliant, and useful career is now ended ; at the command of his Master, Beecher has laid down his earthly task, and is now serving Him among the glorified saints in heaven. To describe Mr. Beecher's life during this interval in detail would be impossible in the limited space at our disposal : the years have been full of loving service. Plymouth Church has continued till the last Mr. Beecher's home ; but this grand man might well have claimed, as did Wesley, the whole world for his parish. The minister's voice, lifted up in comfort or admonition to his own people, was heard through the medium of the press, not only throughout the length and breadth of his own land, but its sound travelled over the waves of the Atlantic, and his powerful words made their influence felt in the hearts and lives of Englishmen.

It was a good thing for his country that Mr. Beecher was willing to travel all over it, lecturing on almost any and every question. Many a time, after taking the Sabbath evening service in Brooklyn Church, has Beecher travelled by the midnight mail in order to be in time for a lecturing engagement at a distant town on the Monday ; and after

lecturing in different towns on the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, he has returned to conduct the Friday night prayer meeting, which has always been a great feature in the worship at Plymouth Church.

Those in England who love and admire Mr. Beecher (and is not their name legion?) will always be happy to remember that some of the last months of his noble life were spent in our land. The year 1886 will long be remembered as the date when England had the pleasure and honour of entertaining many distinguished colonial visitors; but among them all none received such an ovation, or rather series of ovations, as the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and his wife. Now that the great "Apostle of Love" has gone to his last rest, we recall with deep feeling those summer and autumn months during which he thrilled, with his unparalleled oratory, the crowded audiences which, whenever he was advertised, thronged to hear him preach, or lecture, or speak. While in London, Mr. and Mrs. Beecher were the guests of Dr. Parker, the gifted and well-known minister of the City Temple, and Mr. Beecher's first public appearance, on the occasion of this visit, was in Dr. Parker's church, where, on July 4th, he preached a sermon on "The Essence of Religion." The congregation were not a little surprised to find that Mr. Beecher, instead of occupying the pulpit, took his stand upon a platform under it. As soon as he began to speak, which he did in the somewhat low tone usual to him in starting, there were cries of "Pulpit" from various individuals in the congregation. Mr. Beecher said—

"If you will make less noise you will hear me before I get through. As to the pulpit, I think about it as Daniel Webster did: he regarded the continuance of religion in this world, in spite of pulpits, to be one of the signs of its divinity. I suppose pulpits were originally framed after the apocalyptic vision of a candlestick, and ministers have been too much like wax candles in candlesticks—hard and stiff, with very little light. No man would ever undertake to plead for the life of a fellow-man out of a pulpit. No man would ever undertake to go before a crowd for votes and be perched up on the top end of a candlestick. When a man is in earnest in preaching, he ought to preach from the top of his head to his toe. It is not the voice alone; it is the man informed with his subject that preaches."

Mr. Beecher thoroughly enjoyed his visit to our country,

but he found it exceedingly tiring, for he was allowed very little rest; and it was noticed that at the end of his stay he sometimes looked fagged and worn. This is not to be wondered at. A man possessed of a less splendid physique would have broken down under the ceaseless strain of travel, social gatherings, and public speaking which fell to his share. His days were taken up in ringing the changes on sermons, lectures, and addresses in most of the large towns of the country. Mrs. Beecher, who accompanied her husband everywhere, won not only admiration but love from all who saw her; her sweet, placid face was to many a sermon in itself.

Shortly after Mr. Beecher's arrival in England, Mr. Henry F. Gillig, President of the American Exchange, gave a grand dinner in his honour. The banquet was held at the splendid recently-erected Hotel Métropole in London, and was graced by the presence of about eighty American and English gentlemen, all representative men, with names of fame and power. Among those present were Canon Fleming, Rev. Mr. Haweis, Dr. Parker, Mr. Wyld, Mr. Justice Matthews, Sir T. Chambers, and the Hon. T. N. Waller. Many toasts were given. "The Queen" and "The President of America" were followed by the singing of the National Anthem and the "Star-Spangled Banner." The toast to Mr. Beecher was received with acclamation, all the guests rising and cheering. Mr. Beecher's speech in reply was characterised by his usual large-souled sympathy. After claiming brotherhood with Englishmen, he said, "Do you think anything can take place in Great Britain that is not of interest to us on the other side? We are looking at your affairs now going on, we are now looking at you and your statesmen, from the crown on the head of your revered and most beloved Queen, whom we esteem almost as much as you do, and upon your statesmen and their opinions, and their careers; for it is a part of our civilisation, and it is a part of our right, to rejoice when they are right, and not to rejoice when they are wrong."

Another welcome which was accorded to Mr. and Mrs. Beecher, and which partook of a more homelike and less

ceremonious character, was that given by the Board of the London Congregational Ministers, with their wives and other ladies. The meeting was held in the Memorial Hall, and was presided over by the Rev. John Nunn, the year's chairman of the Board. Mrs. Beecher was presented at this meeting (which partook of the nature of a *conversazione*) with a beautiful bouquet; and the address of welcome read by the Rev. Dr. Allon, the oldest London Congregational pastor, was so unaffectedly cordial, and indeed loving, that we venture to quote from it at length:—

“My dear Mr. Beecher,—I have been requested by the officers of the Board of Congregational Ministers in London to address to you, in the name of its members, a few words of fraternal greeting and welcome. Until this morning I had purposed only a few sentences of simple and spontaneous recognition, but the interest which your coming hither has excited has been so great that the character of our meeting has changed; and as I speak for others as well as for myself, and with the restrained references of a personal address, I have presumed upon your good-nature permitting me to put upon paper the few words that I would speak. For the information of some here, if not your own, I may say that the Board of Congregational Ministers is a purely spontaneous and fraternal fellowship, formed rather more than a century ago, and at the present time comprising about two-thirds of the Congregational ministers of London and its suburbs. From time to time at our monthly meetings we are glad to welcome as visitors ministerial brethren from different parts of the kingdom, from our own English colonies, from the continent of Europe, and especially from the United States of America. You find us to-day open-hearted and full-hearted, in warm appreciation of your own ungrudging esteem; more united in mutual family affection than at any period in the history of the two nations. It is not our fault that the interest which your visit to us to-night has excited has changed the simple fraternal recognition that was intended into something like an ovation. It is not every American who would have evoked it. It is an indication of the honour which attaches to your name, and of the estimation in which your great gifts and services are held. But we may not forget that on your former visit even these did not suffice to quell resentment. True, you were then a quarter of a century younger, but you were not unknown to fame; half your public life had been lived, and the place you had taken in the esteem of all English-speaking peoples was very high. I well remember my own first realisation of your exceptional gifts. It was from the lips of your distinguished sister, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, during her visit to England in 1853. She had been hearing one of our greatest English preachers; but instead of the boundless admiration that an Englishman naturally expected—‘He is,’ she said, ‘all very well; but oh! for half-an-hour of my brother Henry!’ How

largely my English ignorance and vanity discounted the comparative estimate it is not necessary for me here to say. A few years afterwards you honoured me with your personal acquaintance—the beginning of a friendship that has been one of the joys and blessings of my life. We honour in you, my dear brother, the great law of distinctive endowment, which is surely intended by the Creator to excite special admiration and esteem. It is no disparagement of men equal in other qualities specially to honour those exceptionally endowed. In you we honour a great preacher. Like the poet, the preacher is born, not made. The manipulation of the greatest artists in human nature can touch only the form and circumstance of the man; the mystic life, that by its subtle qualities of affinity, susceptibility, and intensity, makes one man to differ from another, is the distinctive gift of Him who entrusts to one man ten talents, to another only one. To you God has given the ten talents, and each seems to contribute its quality and force to the harmony and power of the entire preacher. The qualities of such power as the orator wields defy analysis; they may be enumerated and classified—light and heat—but their active power, their inter-relations, which make up the one forceful life,—who shall appraise? The river that bears upon its bosom half the merchandise of the world is simply the collective force of the rivulets and distillations of half-a-dozen counties; we simply recognise, admire, and are thankful. Only it must be said that with great original endowments you have combined a diligent culture and a practical energy that have made them great practical forces. No man is “a mute inglorious Milton” save through culpable lack of practical uses; the greatest gifts are as though they were not if not practically applied. Why, the simple list of your preachings and lecturings in England is enough to take the breath away of the youngest man endowed with only ordinary muscular and intellectual forces. And such has been the record of your life, “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” As preacher, as lecturer, as social and political reformer, as author, you have spared no toil, shrank from no conflict, compromised no conviction; with largeness of grasp, catholicity of sympathy, and strenuous energy, you have applied whatever you believed to be the truth of Christ to the common things of daily life. The luminousness of your apprehension, and the fearlessness of your application, have won for you the esteem even of those who have differed from you the most widely. Whatever men may have thought about Henry Ward Beecher—and they have thought and said strange things—whatever their judgment of the truth of his principles or the wisdom of his methods, there has, I suspect, been no exception to the conviction that through and through he was one of the most manly of men—a man who, at any cost, must speak his thought and do his duty. We do not always agree with you—our tribute of admiration would not be much if we did: catholicity demands differences as the condition of its charities. Perhaps on some matters the views of some of us may be diametrically opposed to your own. Nor am I so foolish as to disparage dogmatic opinions. “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” The theology

of a man largely determines the strength, the sanctity, and the spirit of his religiousness, and is of vital importance in a religious teacher. Fidelity to truth is the religion of a man's intellect, to be jealously guarded in all its forms and inspirations. In no case should charity itself induce us to conceal or to compromise any truth that we think to be such. Where we differ we will debate with you; withstand you to the face, so far as our own convictions of truth demand it. But there are truths and truths, the relative importance of which must affect feeling and fellowship. There are conceptions of the Lord Jesus Christ and His work which determine distinction between the human and the Divine, which vitally affect our feelings towards the Christ—determine our worship and inspire our service. You, my dear brother, have ever been emphatically faithful to the cardinal Christian truths of the incarnation and the atoning death of the only-begotten Son. No man has more fully or fervently preached Christ as the Divine Son of God, sent by the Father, and consecrating himself a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. You have ever offered to Him a reverent and loving worship; you have preached Him as the light and the life of men; you have set forth His great love as the inspiration of all true religious feeling and life; and you have claimed for Him a grateful and passionate love which shall consecrate, not merely the sentiment and the things of life, but life itself to His service. Such being your preaching, it is not much that we refuse to permit any differences about secondary dogmas to lessen our confidence or qualify our love. You exercise only the liberty that we ourselves claim, and within the lines of common inspirations and sympathies in cardinal things our recognition is not merely such as we might accord to any true and noble-minded man, however great his divergence—we welcome you as a common disciple and as an honoured teacher of what we alike believe to be the Master's Gospel. I do not know that there is anything very wrong in us, as your ministerial brethren, looking with a kind of pious coveting upon the great gifts that as a preacher you have for fifty years, and, without dimness of spiritual eye or abatement of oratorical strength, continuously exercised. I wish I could preach as you can. I wish I had such a record behind me. I do not murmur at Christ's distribution of gifts to His servants; I would not if I could dispossess you. We glorify God in you, and without discontent or envy offer you our congratulations and love; but I wish we were more of us like you. We welcome you here, my brother, with sincere, and full, and thankful hearts. As common servants of the one Divine Master, we "esteem you very highly in love for your works' sake." For your large heart of brotherly love, too, we esteem you. The expression of our affection finds only simple forms; the affection of many hearts towards you finds no formal expression at all; they silently greet you and will invisibly follow you. It is one of the meetings of life that may not recur—some of us, like yourself, have the years of life behind us. Like ships at sea, we pass and salute each other, and see each other no more. There is a meeting where no farewells are spoken—a place where they who gather "go out no more for ever, but their works do follow them;"

and there the humblest services will be recognised with the large and gracious optimism of Divine love. His grace keeping us faithful to the end, we shall meet in our Father's house, and it may be that the meeting of to-night will not even there be wholly forgotten."

In response to this Mr. Beecher gave a long address, which was, in point of fact, the history of his life. It was given in his usual simple and yet eloquent style; he spoke as to brethren, and concluded his address with the words—"As my years grow more, I want to bear a testimony. I suppose I have had as many opportunities as any man here, or any living man, of what are called honours, and influence, and wealth. The doors have been opened, the golden doors, for years. I want to bear witness that the humblest labour which a minister of God can do for a soul for Christ's sake is grander and nobler than all learning, than all influence and power, than all riches. And knowing as much as I do of society, I have this declaration to make—that if I were called to live my life over again, and I were to have a chance of the vocations which men seek, I would again choose, and with an impetus arising from the experience of this long life, the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for honour, for cleanliness, for work that never ends, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. I would choose the preaching of the Gospel—to them that perish, foolishness; to them that believe and accept it, life everlasting." In the prayer which followed he poured out his very soul, in praise to God. The following very significant sentence occurred in the prayer:—"How soon our life flies away! How near we are to the great land! Our fathers are there, our mothers, our children are there; but Thou, chiefly, Jesus. We are coming, and are glad as the years go by. We would not die, and yet we are in a strait, often betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Jesus, though it be perhaps needful for Thy work and Thy cause that we abide yet longer." Little did he think then how soon he would hear the call of his Master, "Come up higher!"

One of the most interesting addresses given by Mr. Beecher was that on "Preaching," delivered in the City Temple on the morning of Friday, 15th of October. In spite of the rain which fell heavily, the chapel was filled

with an audience of ministers and students in training, who had gathered together to learn all they could from the lips of the noble veteran preacher before them. Dr. Parker occupied the chair, and intimated that at the close of the address, Mr. Beecher was willing to receive and try to answer any questions which might be put to him on the subject of the morning's talk. As may be imagined, Mr. Beecher, on such a subject and before such an audience, was at his very best. The address was marked by great force and power, and was withal full of tender, fatherly sympathy. Speaking on the "one thing needful" in the character of a preacher, Mr. Beecher declared that essential to be love to God and love to man. This, he contended, should be the fundamental principle of a Christian minister's life, and without it, let a man's natural gifts be never so brilliant, he could never hope to be truly successful in his high calling. Referring to his own life, Mr. Beecher said there had been a time in his experience when he had been so poor that he had been obliged to let a letter lie in the post office for a week for want of the twenty-five cents. to get it out. Mr. Beecher intimated that many a time since he had looked back on those days of trial and struggle as some of the happiest in his life. As may be easily understood, the invitation of questions, in such an audience drew forth many responses; and Mr. Beecher's answers thereto were very wise and pertinent. In reply to a question respecting the proper length of sermons, he advised the students to preach only as long as people wanted to hear them, and no longer. Questioned as to his own method of preparation for the pulpit, Mr. Beecher said that he was not in the habit of specially preparing his sermons, but that his whole life was a preparation, and that the sight of a crowded congregation always stimulated him to his best efforts. He did not, however, advise young preachers to start on those lines, but to endeavour to attain to the facility by long practice. Interrogations upon one phase and another of the subject came in very rapidly, and the chairman was at last obliged to put an end to them. In his closing speech, Dr. Parker referred humorously to some of Mr. Beecher's characteristics. He said—

"The defects of his character which I shall mention are defects which you will instantly recognise. First of all, it is next to impossible to get him to answer letters. That is a serious drawback. A man who receives about forty letters a day ought to answer them every one with his own hand, and be grateful to those friends who have forgotten to enclose a stamped and directed envelope. Mr. Beecher has nothing else to do ; why should not he answer all the letters and pay the postage? Here he is singularly deficient ; yet, in wonderful keeping with the self-contradiction of his character, he has a pen always in his vest pocket—a self-supplying pen—and sometimes, for about five minutes, he is seized with a *cacoëthes scribendi*, and nothing will do but he must answer letters. I do not believe he finishes all of them, and some of them I believe he never posts ; but there is a general trust in Providence that, having begun a letter, somebody else will finish it, and, having left it about somewhere, somebody in the course of nature may be weak enough to post it. You cannot wonder that there should be two or three men here and there who feel a little uneasy. The wonder is that there are not eighteen, such an eighteen as the tower in Siloam fell on. Then, again, I have discovered in him a most aggravating feature—he is eternally young. I wish he were about my own age, and then he would know what it is to be tired ; but he positively wears me out with his redundant, superabundant, ever-recovering and ever-renewing energy. One of our friends, who has just spoken, remarked, in a tone of suggestive pathos that in order to be at this meeting he got up this morning between five and six. There was a wail in the tone as of a modern Jeremiah. Why, I cannot keep Mr. Beecher in bed much after five any morning. Now, that is a trifle irritating to a man like me, because, like the last speaker, I only get up when I cannot help it. I like it to be the last thought and the last device, and to have about it a mournful suggestion of absolute necessity. Here is a man who cannot be kept in bed, and yet all the while he is coming before the public with the false colour of being seventy-three years of age."

The meeting terminated by the chairman offering in the name of all present the right hand of fellowship to Mr. Beecher ; and the ceremony of hand-shaking was performed amid great acclamation.

Another enthusiastic reception which Mr. Beecher received was that from the Congregationalists of Liverpool. They had been desirous of welcoming him on his first arrival, but had been uncertain as to the date of it ; although, however, the meeting was held at the close instead of the commencement of Mr. Beecher's visit, it was none the less hearty and enthusiastic. Referring to the rough reception he met with on his memorable visit to Liverpool at the time of the Slavery Abolition agitation,

Mr. Beecher said, "Brethren, I am very glad to see you. I am glad to see anybody in Liverpool who has any kind word for me. I have been here before. I have always described it as fighting with the beasts at Ephesus. It was a very comely sight, providing you happened not to be in it. Well, it was a victory." This meeting was the last that Mr. Beecher attended in England; his time was drawing to a close; it had been taken up almost too completely with work. Mr. Beecher had preached many times in London (mostly at the City Temple) and in several of our large towns; his voice had also been heard in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The lectures which he delivered were invariably listened to with intense interest—they were finished and scholarly productions, affording those who were privileged to hear them a rich intellectual treat. Mr. Beecher received £30 for each lecture he delivered—his attentive friend and agent, Major Pond, making arrangements and taking all risk. Major Pond knew enough about Henry Ward Beecher to make his testimony valuable and reliable, and he says that, though he has travelled with him more than 400,000 miles in his lecturing tours, he has never known him commit a mean action. The old proverb of a prophet being without honour in his own country was not true of Mr. Beecher; wherever he went, the Americans flocked to hear him, the seats at his lectures often commanding fabulous prices. A lecture given at San Francisco realised the unprecedented sum of £850. But although he received a great deal of money for his work, he was very charitable and generous; and gave away so much that he has not by any means died a wealthy man.

From Liverpool Mr. and Mrs. Beecher crossed over to Ireland, and at Belfast they were entertained by a number of ladies and gentlemen of all denominations, mostly ministers and their wives. Speaking in his address at this meeting on the subject of creeds, Mr. Beecher said—"Sydney Smith said the Thirty-Nine Articles were made to be subscribed to but not believed in; but I subscribe to my creed and I believe in it, and I have tried all my long life to practice it—it has governed and shaped my life. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.' That is the first article; and the second is, 'Thy neighbour as thyself.' There is the creed that never was acted up to yet, except by Jesus; and I have struggled for it, and therefore I have had to be at variance with a good deal of the theology that is going." This was the last public meeting which Mr. Beecher attended in our country, and it is needless to say that it was characterised by the same heartiness of spirit and good fellowship which had marked the meetings held in England. At the close of the meeting a number of those present pressed forward for an introduction to Mr. Beecher, many ministers especially thanking him earnestly for the help and inspiration he had given them in their work.

Mr. and Mrs. Beecher spent in all nearly four months in our country; they came at the beginning of July and stayed until the end of October, so that they saw our little island at its very best, and left it before the November fogs began to make their appearance. The distinguished visitors sailed from Ireland in the steamship *Etruria*. They had, on the whole, a very pleasant voyage, though Mr. Beecher suffered all the time from the attacks of his old enemy, sea-sickness. New York was reached early in the morning of Sunday, October 31st, in a misty drizzle which was the reverse of cheering. Mr. Beecher, who was one of the first to leave the vessel, looked so strong and well as almost to discredit the tale of his incessant bodily discomfort from the first moment of setting sail. After a few words in reply to the congratulatory greetings of friends and acquaintances who were present, Mr. and Mrs. Beecher got into a carriage and were driven straight to their home in Brooklyn. Once arrived at home, it might reasonably have been expected that Mr. Beecher would have been content to rest for the remainder of the day; but Dr. Parker had rightly described him as wonderfully energetic, and although he did not take any part in the services of Plymouth Church on the day of his landing, he managed to visit the three mission schools in the parish, and received at home some of his most intimate friends, who, learning of his safe arrival, could not rest till they had seen their beloved

pastor face to face, and congratulated him and themselves on his return. Plymouth Church was indeed anxious to demonstrate its welcome to its head in some public manner; but Mr. Beecher was invariably averse to anything of the kind, and expressed a wish that nothing out of the ordinary course should take place.

It was characteristic of Mr. Beecher that, while his people revered him as a great and good man, and looked up to him as their pastor, he was also regarded by them lovingly as a father or elder brother, and their meetings always partook of the character of family gatherings. The regular Friday evening prayer-meeting following his arrival, which was the first occasion on which he met with his church as a body, was no exception to this rule. The meeting was held as usual in the lecture room belonging to the building, and Mr. Beecher's people, anxious to see their beloved pastor, began to gather at the two entrances an hour before the doors were opened. Half-an-hour before the time of service, the room, which holds about fifteen hundred people, was crowded in every part. The lecture room, like Plymouth church itself, is particularly plain and unadorned. The platform at one end containing the pastor's well-worn arm-chair, with a table beside it for books, was decorated with a few bright-looking plants, and over the door was hung an inscription which, though it did not possess any artistic merit, was evidently full of hearty feeling—'Welcome, welcome home.' At last the door opened to admit the well-loved and remembered figure, and as Mr. Beecher, with his manly erect carriage, and open, generous, benignant face, walked up the room, the congregation rose simultaneously, and so welcomed him back among them once more. The welcome was speechless, but that it was sincere was emphatically proved by the bright, satisfied-looking faces, and the tears which stood in the eyes of not a few of those who formed the congregation. Doubtless many voiceless thanks went up from grateful hearts to the Giver of all, that he had been so mercifully taken care of in his journeyings, and was spared to come among them again so full of health and strength. With a bow and one of his speaking smiles, Mr. Beecher acknow-

ledged their reception, and then, taking his seat as if he had occupied it only the week before, he gave out a hymn peculiarly appropriate to the occasion—

“ Kindred of Christ, for His dear sake
A hearty welcome here receive.”

The prayer which followed was one which in its comprehensiveness and simplicity seemed to draw all hearts together, and put them in touch with the rest of the race;—“ God bless our Land,” prayed the preacher; “ bless the great Land from which we came. And as we are one with it in ties of blood and kindred, so may we be one with it in the love and fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The prayer-meetings at Plymouth Church were always conducted in the most informal manner, Mr. Beecher remaining seated the whole of the time; and it was partly this which gave the home-like and family feeling which prevailed. On this occasion, after reading a passage of Scripture, Mr. Beecher said he was somewhat at a loss to know how to begin to speak; partly because he had so much to tell his people, and partly because he was so overjoyed at meeting them again, and looking upon their familiar faces, that the feeling almost overwhelmed him. The journey to England, he said, had been finally decided upon somewhat hurriedly; it had been a floating project for years, but he had begun to feel that if he did not go very soon, he would never go at all. His object in crossing the water had not been the taking of a mere lecturing tour; he felt that he could do good service in promoting those broad and grand ideas of life, which, to his thinking, seemed to go hand in hand with the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus. Mr. Beecher confessed that for some time before his visit to England he had been thinking somewhat despondently that his work was done. This belief was borne in upon him, not so much because he was growing an old man, as because he felt that his preaching was not so fruitful as it had been in the past. The sermons slipped, or rather, as the railway men would say, they did not “ bite.” It was characteristic of the noble nature of the man

that he did not, as many men would have done, give himself over to despondency on this account. Mr. Beecher looked at the matter with his usual cheery, practical common-sense. He continued—"I wrapped the robe of reflection about me and said, I have had a good time; I have been born in a glorious age, and have been permitted to accomplish a great many things; and I hope some one will be found to carry on the work I have begun." Then Mr. Beecher went on to speak of all the sympathy and brotherliness he had met with in England, and told, with deep and thankful feeling, how it had comforted him, and given him just the energy which he felt the lack of. The warmth of his reception by the great body of the ministry in England and Wales, and even of Scotland (always thought to be the most rigid of the rigorous) had encouraged him the more because it had been unexpected.

In his own country, Mr. Beecher had been sometimes pained at having to be excluded in some measure from the fellowship of some churches on account of his unorthodoxy; and he bore testimony that in the mother-country there was more genuine religious toleration than in New England. "And so," said he, "since I have been in England, and found that I was so well known, and my sermons so widely read, I have come to the conclusion that there is still work for me to do." A burst of irrepressible applause followed these words, and there were signs of deep feeling as Mr. Beecher concluded his address by asking for their co-operation and help, for he wanted the work in Plymouth Church to be more blessed of God in the future even than in the past. At the termination of the meeting, Mr. Beecher, if he had wanted proof of his people's loving respect for and dependence on himself, had it in abundance—for he stood at the door for nearly an hour shaking hands with them as they passed out; every one pressing eagerly forward to give and receive a word of hearty and unaffected greeting.

The enthusiasm at the services on the following Sunday was even more pronounced. Flowers always figure more or less in the decoration of the otherwise plain church, but on this occasion the church surpassed itself in the beauty of its adornment. Flowers—the richest and rarest—smiled from

every available corner, and the word "Welcome" repeated itself in flowers of every colour. As Mr. Beecher took his place, the grand organ pealed forth, and the overflowing congregation rose with one accord and sang, with such deep feeling as gave to the words an earnestness not often heard,

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

The whole service was characterised by a feeling of deep thankfulness and joy, and when it was over, it took more than an hour to disperse the congregation, every member of which seemed determined to have a shake of the pastor's hand.

The excitement of the welcome home over, church and pastor once more settled down to their ordinary routine, with an added love for and trust in one another which deepened as the weeks went by. Little did anyone expect the blow which was so soon to fall; the loss that was to be experienced by his family, his church, and the Christian world at large, was to come suddenly and without any warning. Perhaps,—nay, *surely*, since God willed it—it was better so. Mr. Beecher had many times expressed the wish that he might die doing the Lord's service, and, though none knew it, the hand of his divine Master was even then stretched out to receive him to Himself. Mr. Beecher took few lecturing engagements; and never had his words to his own people carried more force and earnestness with them than they did now. For a week or two he suffered more or less prostration as the effect of the fatiguing sea voyage; but as time went on, he appeared to regain all his healthful elasticity, and in letters to his friends in England, written only a short time before the end came, he thankfully mentioned the fact that he was as well as he had ever been in his life.

Only a few weeks previous to his death, a Fancy Fair was held in Plymouth Church, with the double aim of getting the people together for social intercourse and obtaining the necessary money to pay for the enlargement and re-decoration of the church parlours. The fair was taken up, like everything else in connection with the church, with great zest and earnestness. The lecture-room

and parlours presented a most gay appearance ; both Mr. and Mrs. Beecher were present and took part in the proceedings, entering into them with as much and genuine enjoyment as the youngest there. One of the most attractive features of the "Fair" was a New England Restaurant conducted by the ladies of the church, and in connection with this Mrs. Beecher published a "Plymouth Fair Cook Book," which, it is needless to say, found a very ready sale.

So excellent did Mr. Beecher's health at that time appear, that he consented, after much persuasion, to finish writing his book, the *Life of Christ*. This work had been interrupted by the great trouble of his life, and although many times pressed to complete it, he had very naturally shrunk from the memories it would awaken. He now took it up however, and with it the writing of his autobiography. As may well be imagined, the close application and the confinement to his study, to a nature that was so active and energetic, would be likely to have a disastrous effect on his health ; besides which, his leisure would be broken in upon by many calls upon his time, attention, and purse—for those who knew Mr. Beecher best declare that, though he might show some impatience to men and women of leisure who disturbed him unnecessarily in his work, he could never find it in his heart to turn away from those who suffered hunger, whether it was for the bread that perisheth, or for the loving Christian sympathy which is more than bread to souls in trouble. Nothing unusual was noticed about him, however, and on the Sunday before his seizure he took the services in his church as usual. After the day's work was over, Mr. Beecher sat on, apparently tired as well might be, while the organist and a few members of the choir stayed to practise the hymn—

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Come unto me and rest,

Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.

Presently, attracted by the music, two little homeless boys stole into the church, and ventured nearer and nearer, hidden by the comparative darkness of the aisles. Unaware that they were being watched, they stood listening to the

sweet sounds, and gazing with childish awe and wonder at the mighty instrument, till Mr. Beecher, gently coming upon them, turned up the face of one of the boys and kissed him,—and then, with an arm about each of the friendless little ones, left the scene of the most brilliant triumphs in his truly brilliant life *for ever*. “It was a fitting close to a grand life—the old man of genius and fame shielding two little wanderers. He recognised, as did his Master, that the humblest and poorest were brethren. A great preacher led out into the night by little nameless waifs.”

Until Friday, the week passed as usual. Early on that morning Mr. Beecher was seized by a violent attack of sickness, which appeared to exhaust him, for after the attack had passed he fell back and seemed to sleep. Not thinking seriously of the attack, Mrs. Beecher left him, but returning shortly afterwards she found him speechless and powerless to move. A physician was at once sent for, but towards noon Mr. Beecher fell into a comatose state, and it was known that there was no hope, and that the noble life which had been to so many like a fountain of blessing had reached its closing hours. The sons and daughters were sent for, and a few most intimate friends stayed listening with the stricken wife for the sound of the wings of the solemn and yet bright angel of death. Many members of the congregation first learned of the sad trouble which had befallen them as a church on the Sunday morning when they came to the House of God, expecting to hear the familiar and beloved voice so soon to be hushed for ever. The day, usually one of such joyful worship in that place, passed slowly and heavily. People looked at each other with awed faces, longing and yet dreading to hear the latest tidings of him who had been to them even as a father. The most tender sympathy was felt and expressed for Mrs. Beecher, who held a place in their hearts only next to her husband. The aged, though truly brave lady with wonderful fortitude stayed by the loved, unconscious form till the last. From that place she sent the following letter in answer to the numberless tenderly sympathetic messages which had been received :—

"To the Beloved Brethren of Plymouth Church.—I cannot speak my thanks to each one of you for the sympathy, the love, and devotion manifested in these last dark sad days for your pastor. He cannot longer speak to you himself; then permit me to do it for him, for myself, and family. Each word of love from the people so dear to your pastor's heart has been a comfort, a balm to a heart wrung almost to bursting. How he loved his Church you will only learn in its fulness when you stand with him in heaven. To each and every one of you my truest thanks and most earnest blessing. Pray for his wife and children, so soon to lose the truest companion, the tenderest father. If we must relinquish all possible hope of his full recovery, beloved, pray that his departure may be speedy; that he may not be long agonised by the struggle between life and death. Pray, that if he must leave us, that before another day dawns he may receive his crown, and be for ever with his Lord.

"E. W. BEECHER."

This letter was read at the Plymouth Church prayer meeting on Monday evening, and surely it was in answer to the agonising prayers to God that went up from that meeting that He took His servant home at once. On the next day, at about ten o'clock in the morning, Henry Ward Beecher passed quietly away in his sleep, in the presence of his beloved wife and children and other relatives, the Rev. S. B. Halliday, his co-pastor, Major Pond, and the physician, Dr. Searle. He had solved the "mystery of life;" and as one thought of his happy spirit, now for ever with the Lord, it recalled irresistibly his prophetic words—the last words of the last sermon he preached in England—"But, oh! when the suffering is all gone, and when we come to find ourselves, and come to find that the work of life, racking, filing, sawing in various violent ways upon us, has made us perfect, and we stand in the light of the other life, to see the meaning of all that has taken place in our obscure life—oh, what an hour of joy and of consolation! O, ye that are in low places, hope and look up! O, ye that are dishevelled in grief, look up and be patient! O, ye that sit in the shadow of death, your Deliverer is at hand! The prison door will by-and-bye be thrown open, and you will come out, and, going up, emerge into the glory of immortality. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Dearly beloved, many of you will go, almost I had said before the month closes, you will have touched the celestial heights, and know the secret

of life. The morning star already shines in the east, and the Sun of Righteousness is rapidly pursuing behind. Children of light, children of God, take courage; look up, go on, your deliverance is at hand."

That day the event that had plunged Brooklyn in sorrow was flashed all over the world. In our own country, and indeed everywhere, the news, "Beecher is dead!" came like a thunderbolt; and thousands mourned as if they had lost a personal friend. The papers which gave the news, with here and there a solitary carping exception, highly eulogised the noble nature and the wonderful life-work of him who was gone. One of the most touching testimonies was given in the *Christian World* by Dr. Parker, whose words had the more weight because he spoke from real personal intimacy, having been acquainted with Henry Ward Beecher for years, and having entertained him during his stay in London. After touching upon his almost unparalleled gifts as a preacher, Dr. Parker wrote—"Never did I hear him say one unkind word of any enemy he ever had. He has wondered at the unkindness of some; he has been unable to account for the ingratitude of others; he has been annoyed at the neglect of men in this country who sought and found his good offices in America; but no word of bitterness did I ever hear him utter. This is what I call being Evangelical. He was not an Evangelical sneerer, an Evangelical pharisee, an Evangelical back-biter; he was an Evangelical believer, inspired by Evangelical tenderness." Dr. Parker's description of the tender love and sympathy which existed between Mr. and Mrs. Beecher was very touching. They used to call themselves "two old folks;" "but," said the doctor, "they might have been two young lovers, so devoted were they to one another and to all their mutual interests and pursuits." In one of the last letters Dr. Parker received from Mr. Beecher the latter wrote—"I am perfectly well. I wonder if I shall ever grow old!" "That wonder," said Dr. Parker, "has now been answered with a glorious '*Never*.' At seventy-four Mr. Beecher was young in heart and thought and hope, and young he will be now for evermore." When the two great preachers said farewell to each other, Mr. Beecher (with the uncon-

ventional freedom of affection which so marked him) put his arms round Dr. Parker's neck with the words, "Good-bye, old fellow, I love you!" These were the last words that passed between the two who had held such sweet and refreshing communion together. Can we doubt that, in the better land, the fellowship will be renewed and perfected?

The last three days of the week that had brought such a loss upon Brooklyn were spent in performing the arrangements with regard to the funeral. On the Thursday the body of Henry Ward Beecher lay in the majestic silence of death in the church where, for thirty years, his voice had resounded and his ministry had served. As he lay there, he preached such a sermon to those who had "ears to hear" as surely even he had never preached before. A continuous stream of 50,000 persons passed through the church as he lay there, anxious to take their farewell of him whom they had so dearly loved. So great was the crowd, that even Mrs. Beecher could not gain admission. On the same day, from Dr. Parker's mid-day service in the City Temple, the congregation telegraphed to Plymouth Church their condolences, and their desire to say over the remains of him who was gone, "Servant of God, well done." Dr. Parker reminded his hearers that when Mr. Beecher returned to Brooklyn after his absence in England, his people rose and sang the Doxology. Now that he had crossed the river, and got safely home, they, too, might praise God. The Doxology was then sung, and the "Dead March" in *Saul* played on the organ. The next morning at nine o'clock Mrs. Beecher and the rest of the family went alone to the church to say their last sad farewells. An hour later the ticket-holders, who had long been waiting at the doors, thronged in and filled every available inch of space in the building, while the streets around were thronged with thousands of disappointed ones. Services were held at the same hour in the four principal churches of the city, which were all crowded, and it was computed that at least 20,000 persons attended the funeral. Business was suspended throughout the city, public buildings were draped, bells tolling, flags flying half-mast high, and in every

way the greatest sympathy and respect were shown. All the most eminent public men attended the services, and here and there among the crowds might be seen grey-headed men and women who had worked hand-in-hand with Mr. Beecher in the great national struggles of his life. The scene in the church was thus graphically described in a special cablegram sent to the *Daily News*:—

“The interior of the church was a most impressive spectacle; it is a severely plain room of enormous proportions, with a gallery running the entire length of each side and across the entrance, and at the other end is a small platform with a simple reading-desk, at which Mr. Beecher preached. At the back and above this looms a great organ with the choir-loft around it. To-day the whole interior was beautiful with flowers, in accordance with Mr. Beecher’s oft-expressed desire, that flowers, and not mourning emblems, should be displayed around his bier. From the desk to the top of the organ was an almost solid mass of growing plants, evergreens, and blooming shrubs. The platform itself was buried in blossoms, and the organ-loft completely hidden by palms, azaleas, Easter lilies, and roses. The framework of the organ was covered with evergreens and flowers, and smilax and roses were twined about the railing in front. The gas-stands at the sides were a mass of ferns; smilax and roses, surmounted by three white doves, rested upon the desk. Mr. Beecher’s chair behind was smothered in immortelles, carnations, and ferns. Floral decorations extended around the gallery front, and along the tops of the side walls lines of holly, laurel, and ivy were festooned, while clusters of roses were placed between the windows. Mr. Beecher’s family pew was left unoccupied, and filled with red and white roses. The coffin, standing in front of the desk, was so completely buried in white flowers of every description, that it looked as if covered with snow.”

The service was conducted by Dr. Charles Hall, an Episcopal clergyman, between whom and the dead man an agreement had been made, that whichever died first the survivor should conduct the funeral services for him. The reverend gentleman gave a simple and touching address, in which he told the story (to which we have already alluded)

of Mr. Beecher's tenderness, the last time he stood in that place, to two little street Arabs. The memories thus awakened aroused such grief in some as was almost uncontrollable; and when afterwards the hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul," was attempted to be sung, few indeed of that vast audience could sufficiently command their voices to join in it.

On the following day the remains of Henry Ward Beecher were conveyed to the family vault in Greenwood Cemetery. The service there was strictly private, only the members of the family following the hearse. All hearts were full of sympathy for the bereaved ones; messages came from all parts of the world to Mrs. Beecher; nor was the gifted sister of him who was gone forgotten. Harriet Beecher Stowe, who with her wonderful pen so nobly aided the cause of freedom, is now eighty years of age, and having finished her life-work, is patiently waiting for her Master's call. May God, as He alone can, comfort all the stricken hearts which mourn the loss of this truly great man!

Both pulpit and press bore high testimony to the nobility of Mr. Beecher's life and character. Now that he was gone, all were anxious to do him justice; and if, among the rest, there were one or two who were ready to detract, their efforts died away like a whisper amid the chorus of nobler and more charitable spirits, who gave him ungrudgingly the honour due to one who had spent his life for his fellow-men.

Perhaps this sketch cannot be more fittingly concluded than with an extract from a sermon preached by Dr. Allon in the Union Chapel, London, on the Sunday succeeding Henry Ward Beecher's death:—

"One cannot to-day help thinking of one of the greatest and most distinctive preachers of our generation—Henry Ward Beecher. It is only a few months since, in the fulness of life and power, he occupied this pulpit, with an inspiration and fervour that some of us will never forget. An old friend of some quarter of a century, I welcomed him to England with a great joy. With him has gone, I think, the greatest natural genius for oratory that I have

ever known. The commemorative services last week, throughout the States, were held, not to show respect to a high official, a ruler, or a great general, but to a simple preacher of the Gospel, whose ministry for fifty years has gathered this esteem and won this place in the nation's heart. No parallel to it is, I think, on record in these modern times. He had many detractors—but this public sentiment should silence and shame them. A man who, for fifty years, living in the fierce light that beats upon a pulpit, could command these testimonies at his death, must have had rare excellencies, both of genius and character. People have a keen instinct for the true qualities of a man. As in all forms of genius, Mr. Beecher was largely a law unto himself. His thought was bold. He paid little regard to conventionalities. The love of Christ constrained him. But he could not be bound by human theologies or church systems; he thought for himself, and tried to prove all things for himself. Traditional creeds had but little weight with him. He did not care much for church systems. All that was divinely authoritative he reverently received; all that was merely human he pushed aside. A perfect system of truth or of church-life does little compared with the dynamic power of a great blazing soul, whose every word is a passion. To Mr. Beecher the Master had given many talents. He was a burning and shining light, and many rejoiced in his light. He founded no school, organised no party. In quiet ways the leaven leavens the lump, and Mr. Beecher's influence will, long after his name is forgotten—if his name ever be forgotten—be felt as the reproductive life of many generations. Thus it is that the Christian sentiment of the world is formed."



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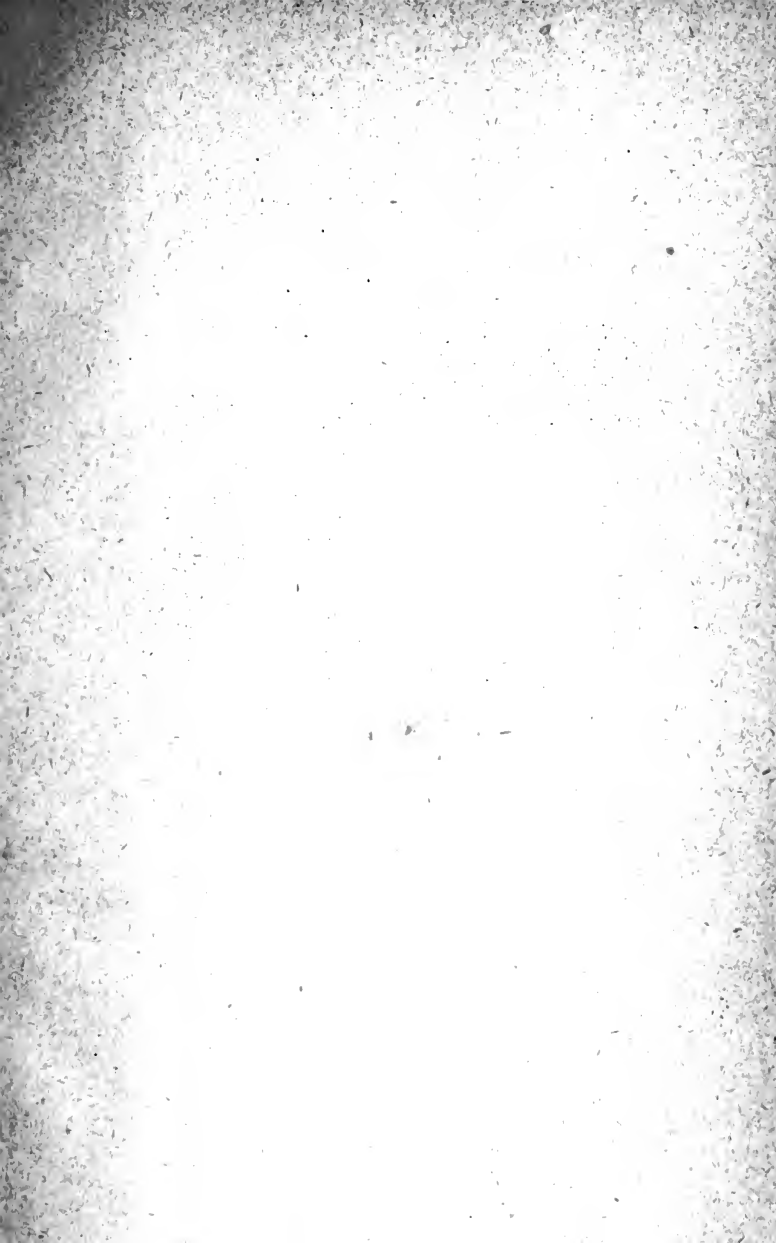
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